

1950-1959

# VACAVILLE

THE PAST CENTURY

## Growth, stability push city toward expansive results

By Richard Rico / Editor & Publisher

And so it begins: This growth thing.

It didn't happen overnight; it just seemed that way. It was as if all the town's leaders through all the years hadn't really tried to sell the virtues of the Vaca Valley. Perhaps they just imagined it. In fact, though, they tried so hard that by now they were numb. For decades they tried to attract the attention of anyone who would listen: Bring your families, bring your skills, build a plant, open a store; there are good schools and good people; land is cheap and there's room for everyone.

But nobody listened. Was anybody out there? For decades, all the little mouse got from its roar was a hoarse voice. The only possible explanation: The world had gone deaf.

Then one day it all changed. As World War II dust settled and America began again to focus on its inner self, a new Vacaville started to emerge. The deaf ears perked up, as if the aural antennae of the world did a major shift. Our message was picked up, they packed up and here they came. In the 1950s, Vacaville defined a buzzphrase still popular (See *Expansive*, Page 6)



The 1950s were a decade of growth and expansion. Little was more influential in pushing that growth — especially in row crops and development — than the building of the Monticello Dam (above). The Vacaville centennial celebration (left) eventually grew into what would become Fiesta Days.



Brig. Gen. Robert Travis (left) died in a B-29 crash near Fairfield. Later, the base was renamed after the World War II hero.

### The fantastic, fabulous '50s

The 1950s — what a time of exceptional expansion.

Growth of what would become Travis Air Force Base, the building of California Medical Facility and Monticello Dam, the widening of Highway 40 — later Interstate 80 — and a renewed spirit following World War II brought about phenomenal growth in Vacaville, growth in residential hous-

ing, schools and commerce.

In this, the latest installment of the 10-month project called "Vacaville: The Past Century," The Reporter chronicles the 1950s, from the Korean War to the building of a new high school to the social trends of the times. Assemble this and other chapters in this extensive collection devoted to Vacaville history.



#### Expansion

City experiences unparalleled growth. / Pages 3 & 13

#### Building a dam

Dam helps Solano green and build. / Page 4-5

#### An institution

California Medical Facility is completed. / Page 11

#### War and air base

Crash means new name for base. / Pages 16 & 17

#### Fiesta Days

Annual event begins to grow with city. / Page 22

#### Fire Department

Paid fire chief and new firehouse. / Page 23



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## 1950

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1950-1959

THE PAST CENTURY

# SPIGOT OPENS ON GROWTH

## Population swells with area expansions

By Cynthia Roberts  
Special to The Reporter

Opportunity flowed through Vacaville in the decade after World War II, turning the tiny ranching town in a thriving little city aching to be modern.

America was ready to nest. It was a time to settle in, get married, have a family, do business and make money. California was leading the way, and Vacaville was in the right place.

"Those of us who have gone through the years in a 'small town' atmosphere, complacent without activities, must now begin to realize that we have outgrown this condition. Like the rest of California, we are on the march," concluded an editorial in a February 1952 issue of The Reporter.

Highway 40 was bringing a more mobile population west to the Bay Area, spawning motels, restaurants and drive-ins through Vacaville and exposing the little fruit town to home seekers.

The growth spigot was turned on big by the federal government when the Fairfield-Suisun Air Base was not closed after the war but instead expanded into "the world's more powerful air base."

By January 1952, \$34.7 million was being spent on 72 separate projects at the air base. And that was just the warm-up act for what 1953 through 1955 would bring to Vacaville and Solano County.

More than 10,000 people were working at Travis in 1952, three times the number of people living in Vacaville. And they all needed a place to nest.

Vacaville's orchards became the new neighborhoods, which were built at an unheard-of rate of as many as 200 units a year.

Local builder James Caughey built neighborhoods on Cherry Street, Luzena Avenue and beyond. The Stanley Davis Co. of Hayward bought Ed Uhl's orchards and built homes around the newly constructed high school.

E.B. Standish Co. of Los Gatos entered the Vacaville housing market after purchasing 32 acres from Emma Neil,

whose land was just west of Uhl's ranch. And Vacaville builders Ramos and Albacete started on Azalea Street and South Orchard Avenue. Lover's Lane was no longer the end of town.

"The biggest building year in history" was declared in 1951, 1952, 1953, 1954 and again in 1955 as houses starting at \$9,000 quickly were bought up.

By October 1955, Vacaville still saw no signs of the growth boom letting up as in other areas of the state, noted The Reporter.

Although Vacaville made economic strides in the late 1940s, it was still a small town in 1950 of only 3,159 people.

Over the next five years, the population grew to 5,650, the official count in February 1955. The City Council knew the town was larger and wanted its much-needed share of state revenues based on population.

The city paid for a special federal census. And the city was right. Vacaville's population was revised to 7,353 in May 1956.

A Stanford University study in 1950 projected Vacaville's population at 5,000 by the end of the decade. Locals considered that too low, noted the newspaper, considering the construction of the new prison hospital, the Monticello Dam and expansion of the air base.

Did they guess the 1960 population would top 10,000?

After a decade such as the 1950s, anything was possible.

Just imagine a school system filling up so fast that from 1948 to 1953 it was completely replaced with new facilities — one new high school and three new elementary schools with a fourth under construction.

The elementary schools operated on double sessions for eight years until facilities caught up in 1956.

And when city leaders started to be concerned that the water supply was getting a little overtapped, along came Monticello Dam.

Despite the wrangling that went on in Washington over its federal funding and fights over who would get the water, by the late 1950s dam water was flowing into Solano County. Vacaville (See Growth, Page 8)



This 1953 aerial photo of Vacaville's Main Street provides only a hint of the growth the city would experience in this and coming decades.

## Growth and city infrastructure

By Mike Adamick/Staff Writer

Fueled by state and federal projects, a housing and population explosion in Vacaville in the 1950s forced the city's hand into bolstering infrastructure.

The decade ushered in a city population at 3,159 600 and left Vacaville reeling with an estimated 11,000 by the time the sun set on Dec. 31, 1959.

The city's infrastructure doubled on top of itself, desperately trying to quell the demands of a population that quadrupled. The water storage facility on Elmira Road was boosted well beyond 1 million gallons. The work force at the Fairfield-Suisun Air Force Base went from 11,000 in the early 1950s to nearly 20,000 people as the decade faded into the 1960s at the base renamed Travis Air Force Base.

The 11,000 people working at the base had an estimated payroll of \$2.5 million to

spend, and Vacaville was more than willing to let the workers empty their pockets in the city. The "new Travis Road" between Vacaville and the Air Force base was built to facilitate just that.

In 1953, the city boasted that its city limits alone, between Vallejo and Sacramento, rested on the "superhighway" known as Highway 40. Local merchants capitalized on the highway phenomenon, feverishly trying to lure shoppers into the city.

They came. And they stayed.

"The city limits were extended in every direction to allow new subdivisions to move in," according to a Jan. 2, 1953, article in The Reporter. It was the best of times for developers. More than \$2.75 million in building permits were issued by the city in 1953. In 1959, that number rose to \$3.5 million.

This had a tremendous influence on the services the city could provide. Taxes rose. Water rates soared. School construction flourished.

In the early 1950s, schools popped up throughout the city, which extended itself toward the highway and toward Orchard Avenue. Millions were spent on school construction throughout the decade, including the new high school and several elementary and middle school additions.

The demand for schools was so great — district population went from about 900 in 1950 to more than 3,000 by 1959 — that when Willis Jepson Middle School was under construction, building additions were called for, essentially expanding the school before anyone used it. By the end of the decade, Vacaville High School had a staff of 52 teachers.

Growth rarely slowed in the city in the 1950s. The city's budget went from about \$573,000 for the 1957-58 fiscal year to \$930,150 for fiscal year 1958-59, largely because of increased water, sewer and rental fees as well as sales tax.

## Facing issues, foreign and domestic

### Vacans greet communism, growth

By Sally Miller Wyatt  
Special to The Reporter

Postwar prosperity and sock hops, drive-in movies and polio vaccines — all images of the 1950s — were as much a part of the threads of social fabric for Vacaville as for the rest of the nation.

Although Vacaville numbered just 3,159 residents in 1950, national issues, events and trends still touched the community.

The fear of communism and the threat of atomic attack was pervasive throughout the entire decade, and residents' concerns were real enough to keep a local Civil Defense chapter busy organizing drills and holding informational meetings.

### Trends of the Times

In December 1950, an article in The Reporter noted that a fresh supply of pamphlets offering survival tips in the event of an atomic bomb attack were available at the library. Atomic experts were regular speakers at Chamber of Commerce meetings, and they were drawn from Travis Air Force Base where, as The Reporter noted in November 1950, atomic warfare research was being studied.

Residents were urged by the mayor to sign oaths of loyalty; in fact, city employees were required to sign such an oath in the fall of 1950. The oath promised that teachers, police officers, firefighters and those working with water and irrigation had "not now or in the past five years been a member of an organization to overthrow the government of the United States or California."

In March 1953, The Reporter noted that atomic bombs were being tested in Nevada, and the Saturday Club in March 1954 hosted a speaker who told the group that

peace was being threatened by "the winds of communism." Air raid sirens still were being tested in October 1955, and Vacaville participated in a nationwide defense alert in July 1956. The practice was designed to help "prepare for atomic attack ... to calculate the local effects of blast heat and radiation fallout if a bomb were dropped on San Francisco."

By the end of the decade, perhaps the fear was easing enough for some humor to appear, when The Reporter ran a December 1959 photo headlined "Air Raid." Instead of bombs and mushroom clouds, the picture illustrated a hapless London pedestrian, nearly completely covered by pigeons.

The threat of polio also was very real for Vacaville and residents of Solano County. Throughout the decade, members of the Infantile Paralysis Association and the March of Dimes raised funds to help treat polio victims, and regular articles kept readers apprised of the number of cases reported each year.

The March of Dimes ran regular fund-raising drives, and the 1952 area campaign was dedicated to helping area youngsters, including Vacaville's Glenn Miller, who had been afflicted. In Solano County in 1954, as many as 33 people contracted the disease, but Vacaville fortunately did not report its first case that year until August. By 1956, residents eagerly were awaiting polio vaccines.

The first injections were offered to grade school students in January 1956 and again in March 1957. Mass (See Trends, Page 8)



Among the social issues facing Vacans in the 1950s was the threat — real or perceived — of an atomic bomb attack. The state Office of Civil Defense provided lessons for schoolchildren (left) and adults alike.



## Vacaville: A Glance BACK

### 1950

- The wildly successful Centennial Fiesta is celebrated. A later incarnation of the festival becomes the annual Fiesta Days in 1958.
- A B-29 bomber carrying an atomic bomb crashes at Fairfield-Suisun Air Base and kills 19 people, including Brig. Gen. Robert F. Travis. The base's name is changed to Travis Air Force Base later in the year.

### 1951

- The Japanese Temple, the last remnant of the once-thriving Japanese community in Vacaville, is burned to the ground, killing one.
- Highway 40 is expanded to four lanes from the Carquinez Bridge to Sacramento.
- Vaca Valley Acres is annexed to the city of Vacaville, boosting the city's population by about 18 percent to about 3,700 people.

- The Nut Tree's original black walnut tree dies and is cut down.
- Ulatis School opens.

### 1952

- The new Vacaville High School building is completed.
- Building permits go over the \$2 million mark as Vacaville experiences its biggest building boom in history.

### 1953

- Construction begins on Monticello Dam.

### 1954

- Vacaville's first city manager, then called city administrator, Robert H. Meyer, is appointed.

## Vaca's youth seen in many facets of life

By Sally Wyatt  
Special to The Reporter

The Reporter in the 1950s regularly kept its readers abreast of youth activities, frequently reporting on Boy and Girl Scouts club news, as well as annually listing Dixon May Fair winners.

Area youngsters also took part in popular annual Easter egg hunts when, in 1950, more than 700 turned out. Just three years later, in a reflection of how fast the town was growing, the number of egg hunters had grown to 1,500.

Older children and their parents welcomed a new drive-in theater to the area, which opened for business in the spring of 1950. The theater was located in Fairfield at the intersection of "old Highway 40 and new Highway 40." Movies of the day included a "double horror show," featuring "The Invisible Man" and "The Black Cat."

Educators braced for a "large increase of new students" late in the summer 1951, a theme that would be repeated throughout the decade. In September 1954, a banner headline announced that 1,900 students enrolled, 400 of them at the high school.

Regular readers of "Vaca Hi-Notes," a column written by June Dietz, learned that students were attending rallies and buying hot dogs at lunch time from the Block V club, that the girl's first period and second period physical education classes had challenged each other to a contest and the school welcomed a new student from Reading, Pa.

When not at school, some children chose to play sports, and Little League was a popular choice. In May 1954, a story

announced that 122 boys showed up for Little League tryouts, a record turnout. Only four teams of 15 boys each would be formed, and the managers were John Arlington, Mack Zapo, John Bera and Sundry Moreno.

A minority of youngsters caused trouble, much to the dismay of parents and police officers, who reported in 1956 that the crime rate in Solano and taken a "decided turn for the worse."

Vacaville Police Chief Elmer King noted in May of 1956 that some youngsters were causing a lot of property damage, including scratching auto paint, slashing tires, draining water from radiators, driving around on lawns and putting sugar in gas tanks. By October 1957, another wave of juvenile crime — started by a group of from 12 to 20 youngsters — was hitting Vacaville, and The Reporter said, "in most cases parents appeared to be genuinely dumbfounded to hear of their children's conduct."

Young brides in 1951 were advised to "design your home with the hubby's needs first... Let the old boy put his feet on the furniture if he wants to." When couples did have children, it was the husbands who received credit on the front-page birth announcements, such as this one from 1952: "Wilken — to the wife of Roy Chris Wilken, a son, August 15."

Later that year, an editorial reminded women how much they were saving their husbands by doing housework themselves, instead of hiring domestic help at an average of \$12 a day. The "wifely wage" of only \$7 per day represented a "savings to your husband."

## No place for horror, sex in comics for children

The congressional investigation of comic books which flood the magazine stands has pointed up the fact that they are, to a great extent, anything but comic. Often their principal ingredients are violence, horror, sex and sadism along with advertisements for such items as dueling swords, pistols, rifles and knives.

Now, just how much damage these alleged comic books do to the young readers toward whom they are slanted, can be debated endlessly. Publishers of the books contend that they "don't do a bit of harm." On the other hand, one of New York's leading psychiatrists who has studied the problem declares they are "an important contributing fac-

tor" to juvenile delinquency.

The congressional committee has made it clear that it is not aiming to create a bluenose censorship of the comics. But control of some kind over the extremely violent and debased type of publication, even though technically within the law, is certainly called for. If parents will pay closer attention to the "comic" books their children are reading the public demand for a genuine cleanup in that field will be strong enough to bring results.

There is a wide range of humor and adventure to be depicted in the comics without descending into the realm of horror and dirt.

Editorial, The Reporter  
May 7, 1954

## QUENCHING THE THIRST



Vacaville Museum photos

This aerial photo shows the farming community of Monticello not long before Putah Creek was blocked by the Monticello Dam.

## Monticello Dam helps Solano blossom

By Don Harness  
Staff Writer

Water made Solano County blossom and grow. It still does. But water for irrigation and industry would have remained only a pipe dream were it not for area visionaries. They worked through the 1940s and into the 1950s to gain federal support for construction of Monticello Dam and lived to see Lake Berryessa rise behind it.

What started with a handful of supporters and evolved into the formation in 1940 of the Solano Water Council, with the sole goal of bringing about a dam, eventually led to a ground-breaking ceremony on Sept. 25, 1953, at the Devil's Gate area on Putah Creek west of Winters.

Gov. Earl Warren and state Sen. Luther Gibson hopped onto a bulldozer for photographs and the construction roared to life.

But it was dedicated local people who saw the project through to completion of the dam, which was recognized on Nov. 7, 1957.

The same date saluted the newly constructed Putah South Canal and the Diversion Dam six miles below Monticello Dam.

The first water delivered for agricultural use flowed into the Vaughn Canal toward Dixon on



May 15, 1959.

Solano County agriculture has never been the same. It has flourished.

A front-page Reporter account of the canal on that May date proclaimed the "need for much rejoicing."

The Vaughn Canal intersected the main Putah South Canal about eight miles north of Vacaville and had an official "gate opening" the same day.

Scheduled to be present were board members of the Solano Irrigation District, an agency separate from the Solano Water Council and charged with managing and maintaining the dam and canals. SID President Morris Dally, and board members Olin Timm, Charles Eldredge, Severt Swanson and Kenneth Finch, along with SID Manager James Wiggins, were expected to be on hand. (See Water, Page 5)

This image from downtown Monticello does not dispute the community's quiet, idyllic reputation.

**Audrey, Reenie, Carol, Rosemary**

Find All Your Flower Needs At

**Rose**

As the shop became known around Vacaville, family and friends were hired to help out with the expanding business. With the upcoming holidays (Thanksgiving & Christmas) many preparations were needed to get ready for one of the busiest times of the year.

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## 1955

- California Medical Facility, an innovative state prison charged with housing and treating mentally and physically ill inmates, opens.
- New Alamo School opens.
- Fire destroys Vaca Valley Orchards fruit processing plant.
- The Nut Tree Airstrip opens.

## 1956

- The polio vaccine is made available to Vacaville. More than 350 local school children receive their first inoculations of the Salk vaccine.
- Hemlock School opens.
- Fire Chief Warren Hughes is placed on full-time status as Vacaville's first paid fire chief.



## 1957

- Monticello Dam is completed.

## 1958

- Vacaville's "Western Fiesta Days" celebration becomes an annual tradition.
- The new fire station on Dobbins Street opens.

- Walter Schaefer, one of Vacaville's long-time business and civic leaders, dies.
- The initial phase of Leisure Town, a driving range and a short practice golf course, is begun.

## 1959

- Monticello Dam water flows out to irrigate Solano County fields.



Edwin Uhl  
... fought for dam

## Water...

(Continued from Page 4)

Some 5,000 acres in the Dixon area were the first lands to receive water from the Solano Project, part of the overall endeavor resulting the dam.

A construction contract for the 15-mile-long Weyand Canal followed in June 1959.

While the initial Solano Project was authorized for construction purposes by the secretary of the Interior Department and endorsed by President Harry Truman in November 1948, rough battles still had to be won.

Among key players in gaining federal approval of the dam project was rancher and Solano Water Council representative Ed Uhl.

He testified 17 times between 1948 and 1956, including at hearings in Washington, D.C., and five Sacramento hearings.

In the May 15, 1959, edition of The Reporter, Uhl was quoted on why he was willing to sustain his own financial losses in advocating the dam project despite the fact he never profited.

He compared it to the reason why a person puts on a military uniform.

"(A man knows) he is offering his life and certainly financial loss, but he still goes and fights hard and earnestly.

"I guess it's because a man has to fight for the things in which he believes, fight with all his physical fiber, and I believed the Monticello Dam and the prosperity it would return to my county."

One of the most crucial hearings Uhl faced was before a U.S. Senate committee in 1950 regarding preplanning costs. Opposing were a few locals and mostly Napa interests claiming the Monticello Dam would not be needed nor feasible.

But Uhl's determination and the support of U.S. Sen. William Knowland, gained a \$100,000 in funds to keep the project alive.

Then, in 1951, Congress earmarked \$321,000 for advance planning prior to construction.

The work continued to roll along with a \$3 million appropriation in 1953.

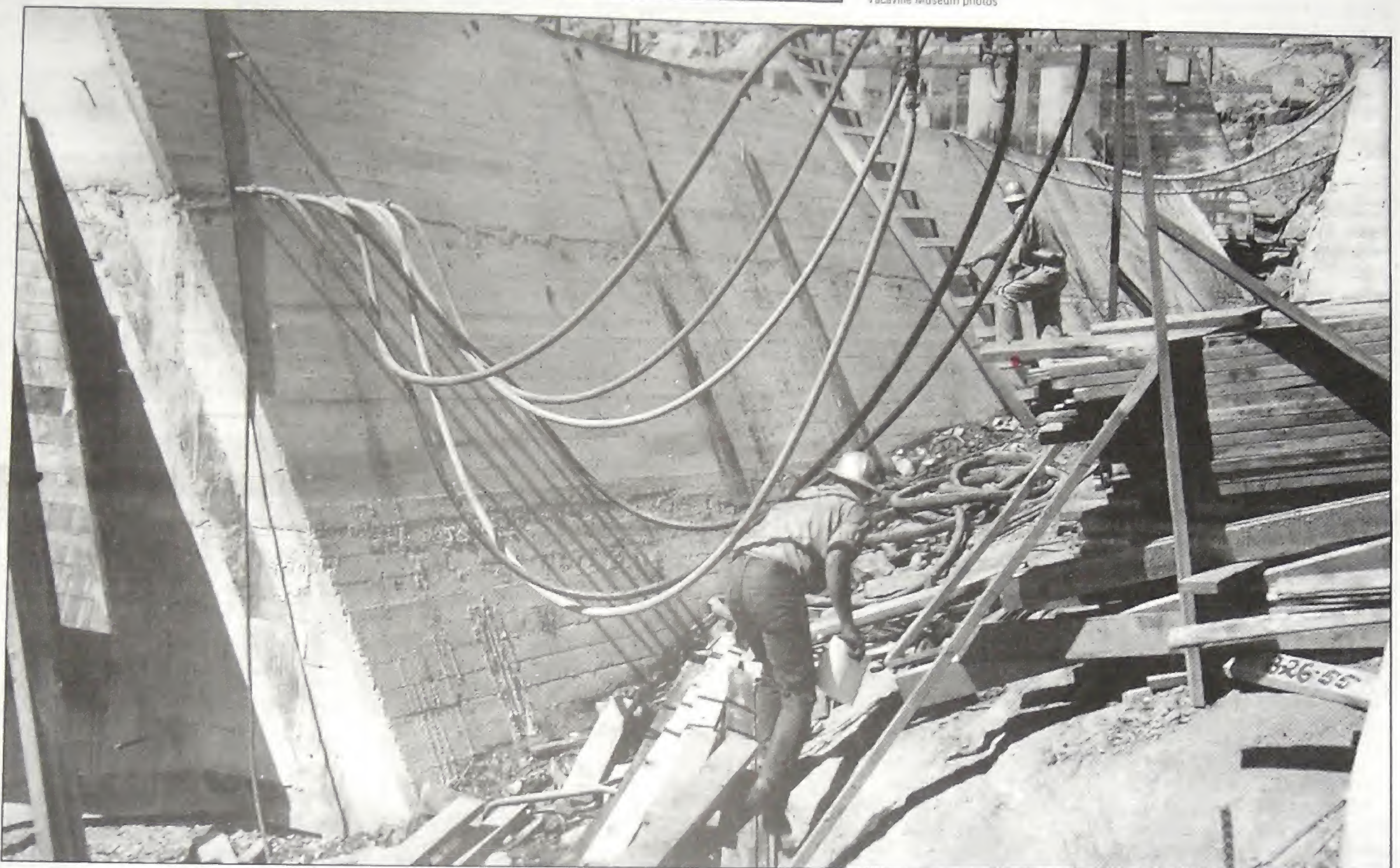
Dam completion costs amounted to \$33,667,000. And later, with completion of the 30-mile-long Putah South Canal and Diversion Dam part of the Solano Water Project, total costs amounted to \$38 million.

In December 1955, flood waters spewed over the uncompleted dam — which itself would



Scaffolding cuts across Putah Creek (left) during early phases of construction on Monticello Dam. A sign at the construction site (above) gives a rundown on the dam.

Vacaville Museum photos



Workmen climb over the work site at the construction of the Monticello Dam on Putah Creek. Work on the dam in the '50s helped area row crops blossom.

Monticello Dam today (right) forms Lake Berryessa, as much a recreation venue as it is necessary for area agriculture.



Reporter file photo

become a factor in flood control as well as water storage and related benefits from recreation to irrigation and drinking water.

The Solano Irrigation District, formed in 1948 and eventually responsible for an extensive canal system for irrigation and certain municipal drinking water, took over operation of the dam from the Bureau of Reclamation in March of 1981.

The district celebrated its 50th anniversary in 1998.

The lake waters of the Berryessa Valley cover minimal remains of what had been the idyllic farming settlement of Monticello.

Monticello was founded by a man with the colorful name of Ezra Peacock in 1867. When the time arrived in 1956 for the town to be evacuated and dismantled, there were 250 residents.

## Solano row crops blossom awash with water from dam

By Cynthia Roberts/Special to The Reporter

In the midst of Vacaville's frenzied city growth, agriculture remained an important industry in the local economy.

A new source of water gave the food growing business a new direction in the 1950s. The Monticello Dam opened up fertile fields to row crop development.

Sugar beets led the top crop production report of 1954. "Sugar beets in northern Solano had now become an important crop in one of the greatest sugar beet producing regions in the world," noted The Reporter on Jan. 22, 1954.

Two years before, Spreckles Sugar opened a new processing place in Woodland that would serve the growing fields northeast of Vacaville, including Dixon.

Truck crops such as tomatoes started to expand in the late 1950s to become another

major crop for the county.

Orchard crops, especially prunes and nuts such as almonds and walnuts, continued to produce but never reached the great tonnage amounts they enjoyed at the turn of the century.

Prunes, apricots, pears and peaches ranked high in the list of top crops for 1953, just behind beef, sheep and sugar beets.

The Pacific Fruit Exchange, the one major packinghouse left in Vacaville, reported 1955 to be the poorest season in 60 years. Only 38 freight cars took fruit to eastern markets, compared to 1,800 boxcars during the golden years. However, ranchers in the 1950s were able to truck their fresh crop to markets in the Bay Area.

Although agricultural production fluctuated in the 1950s, it still remained a large industry for Solano, with a total value of about \$30 million annually during the middle of the decade.

## Do You Remember???



- 1950s — Chickens begin to be sold as "parts" but account for only 5 percent of the market.
- 1954 — Swanson introduces first frozen TV dinner.
- 1955 — Ray Kroc franchises McDonald's.
- Tappan's home-size microwave oven goes on sale.
- 1957 — Saccharin, previously available only as tablets, is pulverized, put in individual portions in bright pink packets, and rechristened Sweet 'n Low.
- 1959 — Reuben Mattus introduces a dense, super rich ice cream and gives it a made-up Scandinavian name — Haagen-Dazs.

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## Travelling back through time: 1950-1959



Joe Lopez

The 50's brought prosperity to Vacaville, the downtown and to Joe's Barber Shop on Main St. Joe the Barber, had been on Main St. for over a decade. His business was more than he could handle and he needed help. In 1954, after the birth of his second child, Joe Jr. finally came to work for his dad full time. He brought with him a new fresh perspective to the shop. Together with the help of several barbers over the years, they made their mark in Vacaville, with quality work and good service. Joe Jr. fit right into his father's shop and within a few years was looking to take over where his father had left off. The focus was on service, and giving the client what he wanted, something that was always important to Joe the barber. A new look was in store for the shop and soon a new owner.



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## Expansive results ...

(Continued from Cover)  
decades hence: Be careful what you wish for.

Growth, expansion, economic stability. A three-headed writhing as elusive as a mythical Suisun wind suddenly came face to face with Vacaville, and it's been in our face ever since.

The '50s may not have been the most dynamic decade in Vacaville's history, but it came pretty close. The effect of a new, puzzling identity was a tripling in the population, from a little more than 3,000 souls at the beginning of the decade to more than 10,000 by its close. The cause was all over the board. The postwar years themselves provided enough positive inertia to swell almost any community's ranks. But in Vacaville and northern Solano County there was decidedly, and uniquely, more.

Lake Berryessa — more specifically water — would forever change the landscape and the playing field. Finally planned in the '40s, Monticello Dam was capped off and water began backing up and over what was left of the little valley hamlet that begrudgingly gave it its name. If Monticello Dam were Mount Rushmore, Ed Uhl's face would be carved in its concrete. The local rancher and protagonist whipped the dream like no other. Supported by businessmen like Monte Gates, Frank Gonzales, Max Brazelton, Henry Rogers, Burt Wykoff, Frank J. Douglass and John Rico, Uhl appeared at dozens of U.S. Senate hearings in Washington, D.C., to hammer his message home: Monticello Dam would provide flood control, and its water would triple agricultural production in Solano County.

A Senate committee was sold, but protests about high water rates at home almost tubed the entire project. A compromise

was reached: The original height of the dam was scaled down so as to make eventual water rates affordable; the reservoir would thus hold 1.6 million acre-feet of water, instead of the originally planned 2.2 million acre-feet. The dam was funded in 1953 and completed in 1957.

From almost out of nowhere came a plan to build a state prison hospital in the southeast reaches of Vacaville. Not surprisingly, public hearings over the construction of a state prison — albeit a medical facility — brought out the townspeople. Who wouldn't be concerned? But their questions were answered and, convinced or not, they saw the California Medical Facility open in 1955. Creating jobs for hundreds, CMF, as it was known for years, also became home to several notorious personalities — Sirhan Sirhan, Juan Corona and Charles Manson, to name a few.

Like the communities around it, postwar Travis grew in geography and strategic importance. There was Korea, and there was the Cold War. The base's new name was born of tragedy: The Fairfield-Suisun Army Air Base was renamed after Brig. Gen. Robert Travis died in a crash of a B-29 bomber off the end of the base runway in 1951. Throughout the years of global conflict and local support, Travis became as much a part of the local landscape as any of its other institutions. Life without the Travis presence was difficult to imagine then; the thought prevails even near the end of the century.

Locally, the Nut Tree's original black walnut tree — the one that legend says was planted by Sallie Fox after her overland trip from Missouri — came down. Asphalt spread, and pollution killed it. But at the same time, a new element at the roadside stop



Members of Vacaville's Volunteer Fire Department, shown in this 1949 photo, in the coming years would define what the department would become today. With volunteer labor and, in some cases, donated materials, the firefighters built the city's first fire station. They are in the back row l. to r.: Rusty Darling, William Sharpe, Louis Mohr, Sal Bloise, George

Caplener, John Pellegrini and Leonard Brawley. Center row, l. to r.: Albert Stevenson, John Rico, Lou Roulund, Harry Strauman, Walter Kashuba, Cy Maloney and Frank Fadley. Front row, l. to r.: Frank Pritchett, Fred Pyle, Frank Libonati, Fire Chief Warren Hughes, Ernest Burd, Mac Chandler, James Marshall and Joe Libonati.

was born. Nut Tree partner Edwin Power Jr. inaugurated a private airstrip behind the restaurant, built specifically to serve fly-in guests. Through a few minor incarnations over the years, the Nut Tree Airport would become the county-owned facility of the 1990s.

The aging Vacaville High School in the heart of what is now Andrews Park was torn down, and its adjacent gymnasium burned down in the '50s. An entirely new school plant was built on Monte Vista Avenue, and the old school site became a city park.

Indefatigable firefighters

rolled up their sleeves downtown to build a modern fire station that would serve the heart of the community for more than 30 years. Under the guidance of Fire Chief Warren Hughes and backed by volunteers and donated materials, the station was finished in 1958. Volunteers decided to do the work because initial bids came in at \$64,500 and "the city just didn't have that kind of money." The firefighters and their helpers pulled it off for just under \$50,000.

At the helm of this fast-sailing ship was Al Porter, mayor for eight years and a councilman for 12. He could relate to the bid of

the fire station. He recalled in an interview, when he became a councilman in 1946, Vacaville's population was 2,600, and the entire city budget was \$50,000. Much of it came from gambling fees from legalized card games at Sam's Club on Main Street. In 1950 the Solano County sheriff suggested that the gambling be shut down, and the city make up the tax difference by putting in parking meters. It did. Other '50s council members were Ethel Gilley, Arnold Clark, Dr. Richard Griffin and John Moriel.

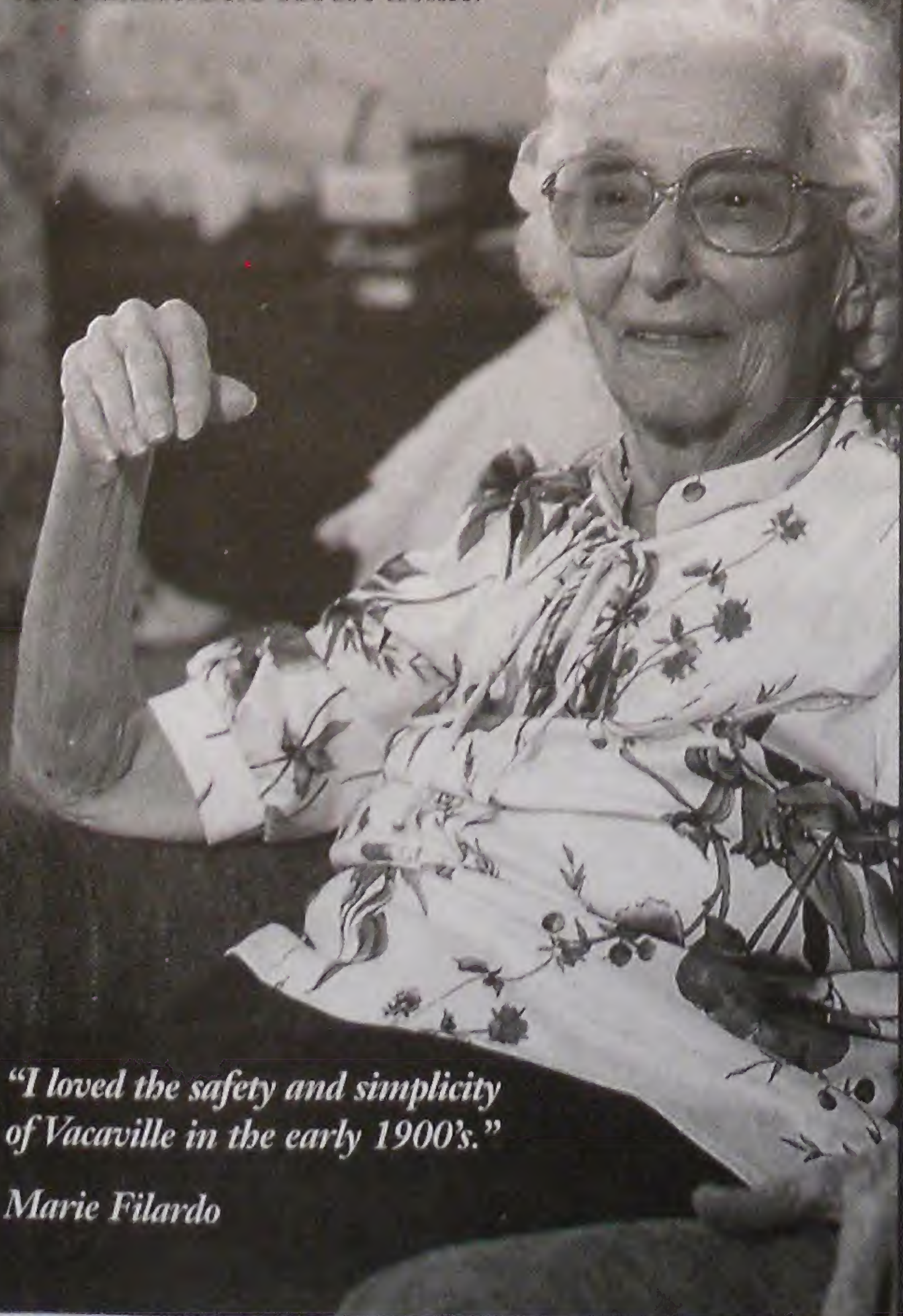
In the '50s, long before he entered politics and became Vacaville's longest-running

mayor, Bill Carroll was a guitar plucker. His "The Empala 6" group was familiar to the local ear. In time, though, now-Supervisor Carroll heard the drums of politics, and he changed his tune.

Fiesta Days as we know it got its start in 1950, on the centennial of Vacaville's founding. A heritage theme was chosen, and the idea went from there. The Fiesta is uniquely Vacaville, but it's even more than that. Vacaville has gone through decades of transformation, from a town to a city. Fiesta Days are a comforting assurance — although a very small one — that there still are some things that never change.

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Shock's has gone one step further. We've also purchased a stunning collection of antique accent pieces to complement our customers existing furniture. Our antique collectibles will lend a special warmth to that favorite sofa or bedroom set. Whichever piece you select will become a treasured heirloom for future generations to enjoy.

Our company and our staff take pride in the wide selection of fine furniture Shock's now has available to its community. Stop by Shock's today and our professional staff of home decorators will introduce you to a whole new world of furniture, antiques and fine collectibles for your family to enjoy now and into the next century!

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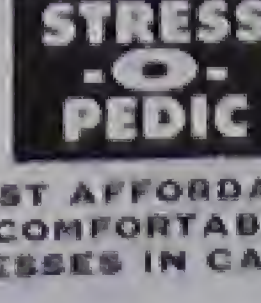
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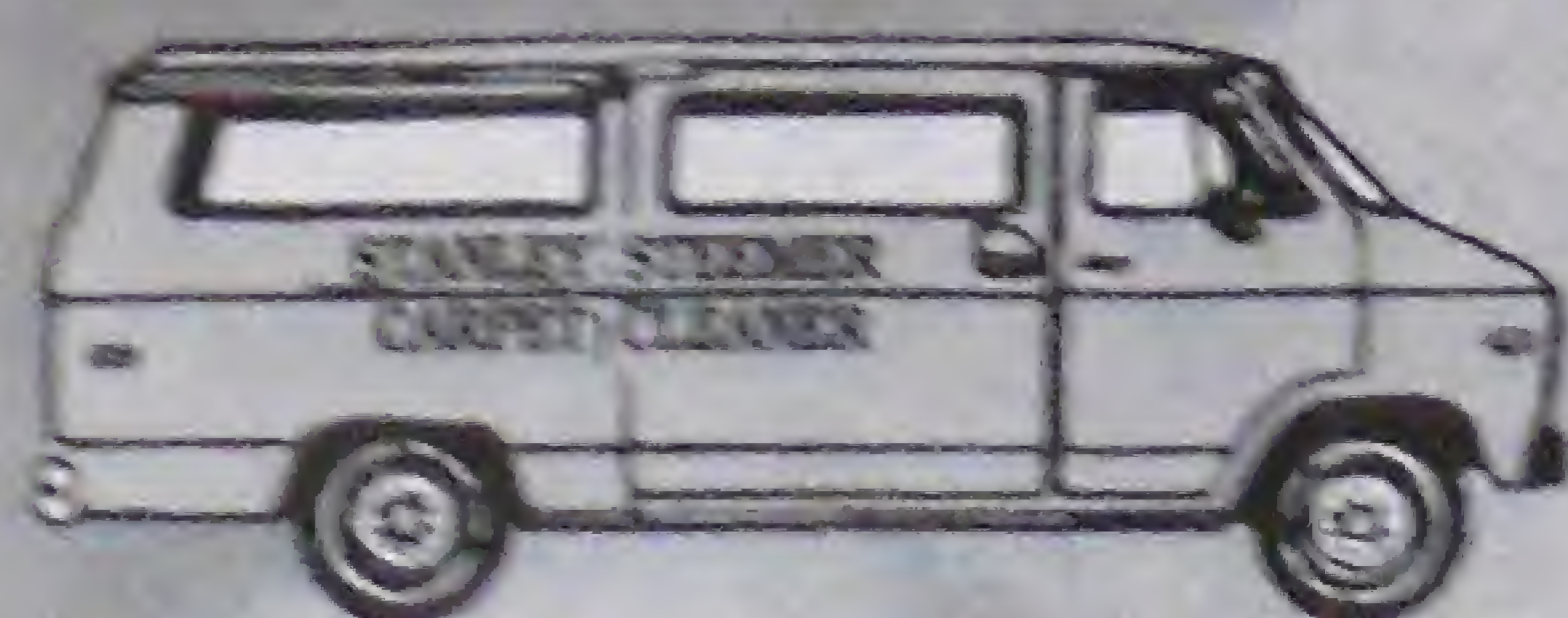
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# A VACAVILLE INSTITUTION



California Gov. Goodwin J. Knight (left) and Richard A. McGee (center), state director of corrections, help place the prison cornerstone in 1955. Goodwin also spoke.

## New prison opens its doors, cells to ailing inmates

By Sean Gillespie  
Staff Writer

Today it's quite logical that people would want spend the rest of their lives in south Vacaville. Hundreds of senior citizens have found it a quiet, peaceful, relaxing place to retire.

But Leisure Town didn't exist in the 1950s. And not all of the people moving to south Vacaville wanted to be there.

For about 2,000 people the decision to move here was left to the California Department of Corrections, which placed its mentally and physically ill prisoners at the new, state-of-the-art California Medical Facility.

Envisioned as a revolution in penology when authorized by the Legislature in 1944, the prison was built on 903 acres of what had been orchard land near Vacaville. City limits were two miles north at the time, so the new prison would be a centrally located for serving the medical needs of California's male inmates.

It also was planned to serve as a reception center for Northern California prisoners, who would be shipped off to other correctional facilities after a few months.

The revolution in corrections at CMF was spearheaded by Gov. Goodwin Knight made after he placed the facility's cornerstone:

"In this institution, these violators will be treated as disordered personalities," Knight told "a large crowd of the interested public." "The old theory that punishment alone will reform and cure

will be revised."

Only few hundred inmates — Paul Johnson, 53, of Solano County was the first for a petty theft conviction — trickled in when the institution first opened in 1955.

By the end of the decade, however, the prison housed around 2,000 inmates, mirroring Vacaville's general population growth during that era and making it the second largest prison in the state behind Chino's. CMF carried a \$20 million price tag by the time it was completed in 1957.

The cells, according to the Vacaville Reporter, featured beds, toilets, wash bowls, small desks and radio earphones.

Charles Bair, 27, earned the distinction of being the first escapee from CMF. The auto thief was sentenced to prison after he had walked away from a Los Angeles County honor farm.

His CMF escape was no elaborate scheme.

"Bair reportedly made his way out of the institution yard about 9:30 a.m., scaled the 12-foot and 8-foot security fences unnoticed by guards and stayed in close proximity to the institution grounds that day and night," The Reporter wrote.

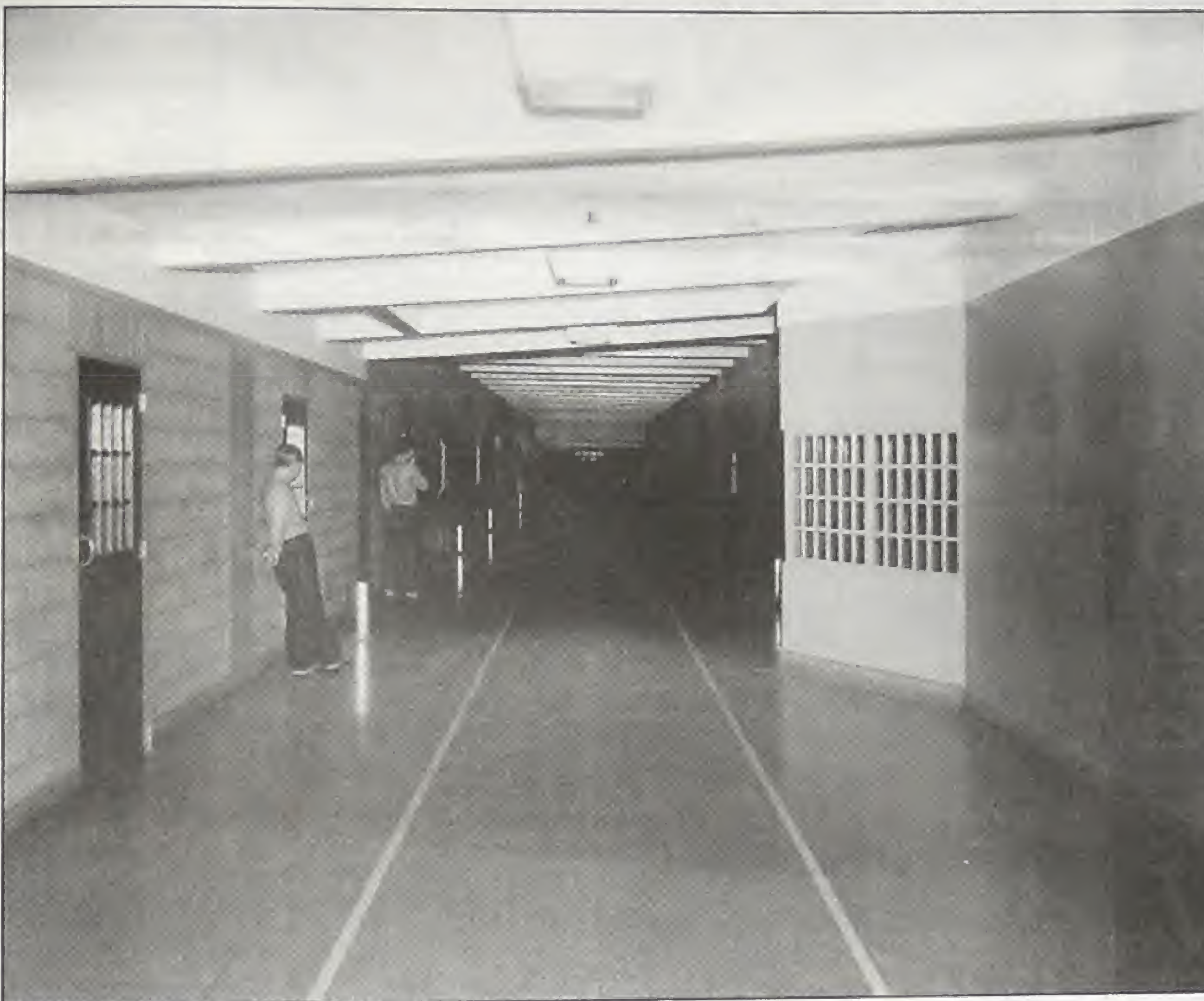
Prison authorities described the escape as a test for rethinking security measures.

"During the 36-hour search, six cars of men were patrolling the areas surrounding the institution. Cooperation from other law enforcement agencies was excellent, according to (associate superintendent Harold V.) Field."

Bair was "frail and meek" after eventually being captured by a farmer near Fairfield.



Reporter file photo



The California Medical Facility (above), shown in this 1957 aerial photo, was several miles south of Vacaville when it was built. Since then, residential neighborhoods have crowded in on the prison and the newer, neighboring prison, California State Prison at Solano. The main corridor of CMF (left) is shown in 1956.

California Medical Facility photos

## California prisons face overcrowding

California's remarkable population growth has a seamy side — the growth of prison population along with it. And the outlook is for a continued rise in the number of inmates which, on the basis of existing facilities, would mean that by 1965 there would be 10,000 in excess of the number that could be properly handled.

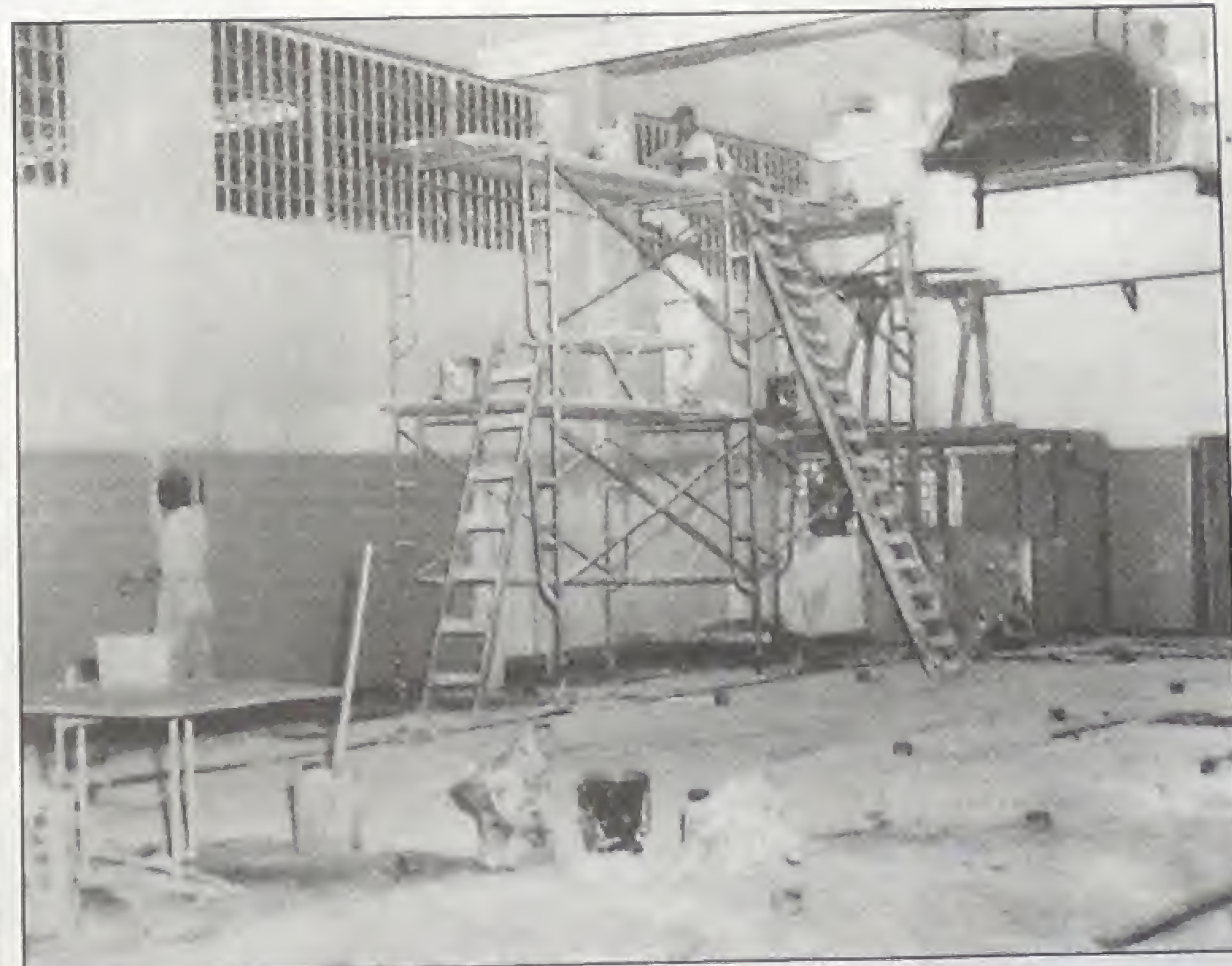
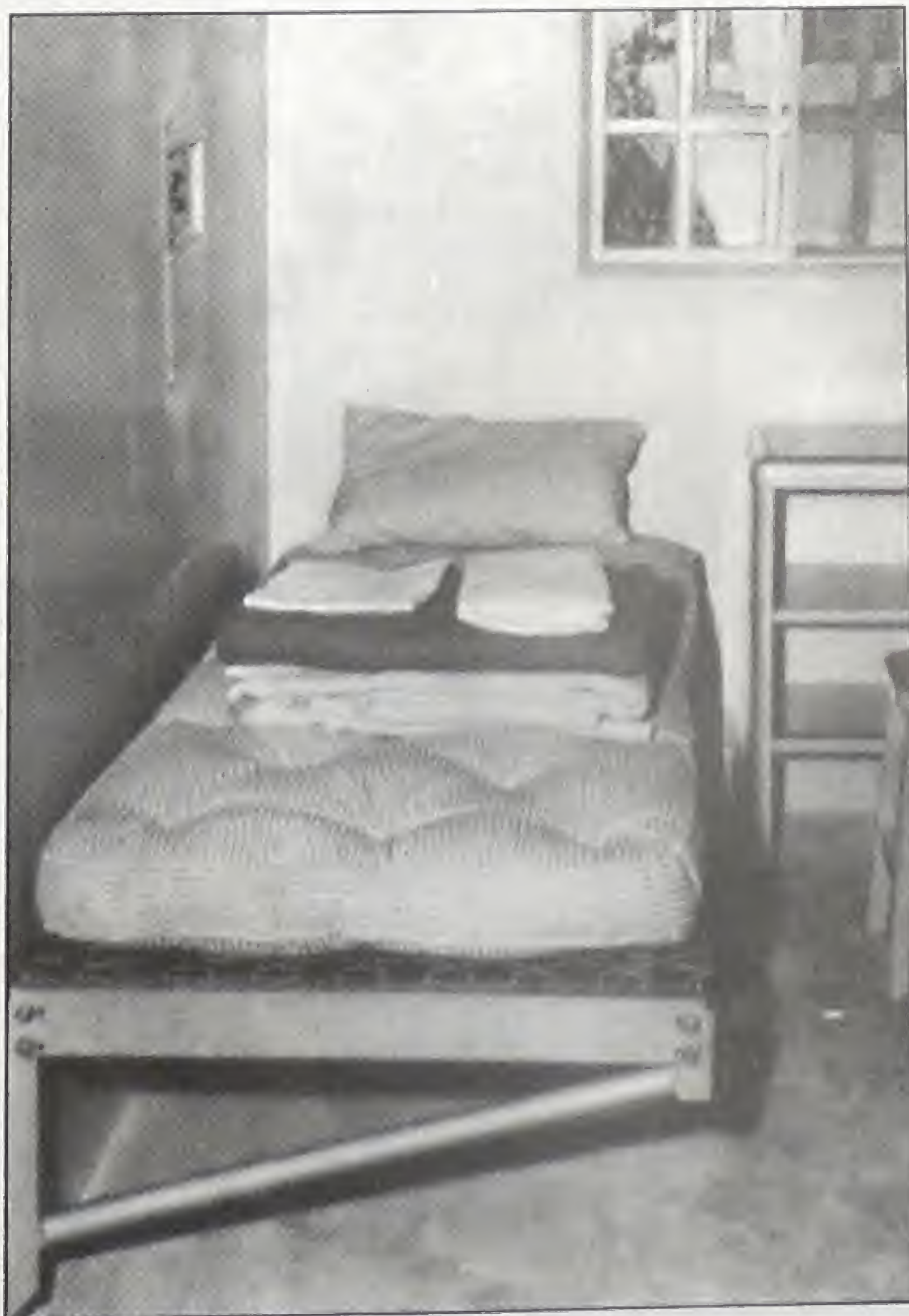
Even now, Folsom prison with a capacity of 1900 is handling 2700 and San Quentin's 4700 inmates are far more than the 2774 it is supposed to house.

In a report on this situation just issued, Richard A. McGee, director of the State Department of Corrections, said: "If additional facilities are not provided, the excess population will have to be handled by crowding them into existing institutions in a manner that is dangerous to the good order of the institutions, and which is damaging to the inmates involved, and hence, both dangerous and damaging to the public."

"A rehabilitation program in the face of this kind of congestion ... will be doomed to failure. With one hand we would be attempting to regenerate, re-educate, and treat, while on the other we would be creating conditions which will spew forth on the public each year several thousand hopelessly damaged personalities instead of rehabilitated men."

The prison housing problem is not one that can be left to take care of itself. It won't go away if we ignore it. So the sooner we face it, the better.

Editorial, The Reporter  
Feb. 4, 1955



Above, a crew in 1954 works on the CMF dining room where thousands of inmates would — and still do — take their meals. Arriving inmates were greeted by a cot, basic furniture and little else (left). Eventually, the prison would be filled to its rated capacity and be forced to make room for even more inmates.



# Meeting the Challenges of Yesterday, Today & Tomorrow



Walter P. Chrysler  
b. 1875 - d. 1940



- 1950 Dodge Coronet



1950 Dodge Wayfarer  
Runabout Sportster -

1950 - 1959

Kicking off the 1950s, consumers were treated to a freshened look of "The Beautiful Chrysler" -- the brand's advertising theme since 1947. In order to heighten the visual presentation of the Chrysler lineup's elegant lines and luxurious interiors, fashion illustrator Frederick Siebel was commissioned to develop the print advertisements.

Chrysler's advertising for the '50s not only pictured elegance in automotive design, it also highlighted advancements in engineering. Hydramatic, the industry's first power steering unit, was introduced in 1951 and reduced steering effort by 80 percent. Following on the heels of Hydramatic, were two other significant innovations -- air-cooled brakes, and the Hemi-head V8 engine.

Eventually, a 300-horsepower Hemi-head engine would find its way into one of the Chrysler brand's most notable achievements -- the 1955 Chrysler C-300. As the most powerful full-size car in the world, the 300 soon found a happy home in the NASCAR circuit, winning 20 out of the 40 races held in '55. Realizing the awesome power generated by the Hemi-powered C-300 engine, NASCAR officials made a decision to ban it from sanctioned racing. Oddly enough, this type of dubious publicity contributed to the popularity of the Chrysler C-300 and led to a proliferation of similar "super cars" in 1956.

Chrysler innovations during the '50s did not stop with the Hemi. In 1956, Chrysler teamed up with CBS to offer the "Highway Hi-Fi" -- a compact phonograph mounted under the dashboard that played specially-made records. 1957 saw the introduction of the now famous torsion-bar front suspension, which provided superior handling and allowed for much lower bodies. And, closing out the decade in 1958, Chrysler created a more efficient and dependable alternative to the carburetor with the development of electronic fuel injection.

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Dear Friends,

For those of us old enough growing up in the 50's, we remember it as a time when things were slower, music was faster and hair-do's were fuller. It was the remarkable time of Buddy Holly and the Crickets, drive-in movies and the end of polio.

Cars, for the most part were huge and had equally huge engines. It was a time when kids still foolishly had drag races on city streets and cruising was a definite "in". The economy, for the most part of the decade, was booming and urban sprawl was happening everywhere.

It doesn't seem all that long ago when we were watching "American Graffiti" in the local theater and longing for those days. Now American Graffiti is an oldie, and we are rapidly approaching a new century. Times are good and we have come a long, long way. "Happy Days" are the days of this decade...nevertheless, it's fun to remember the wonderful 50's...

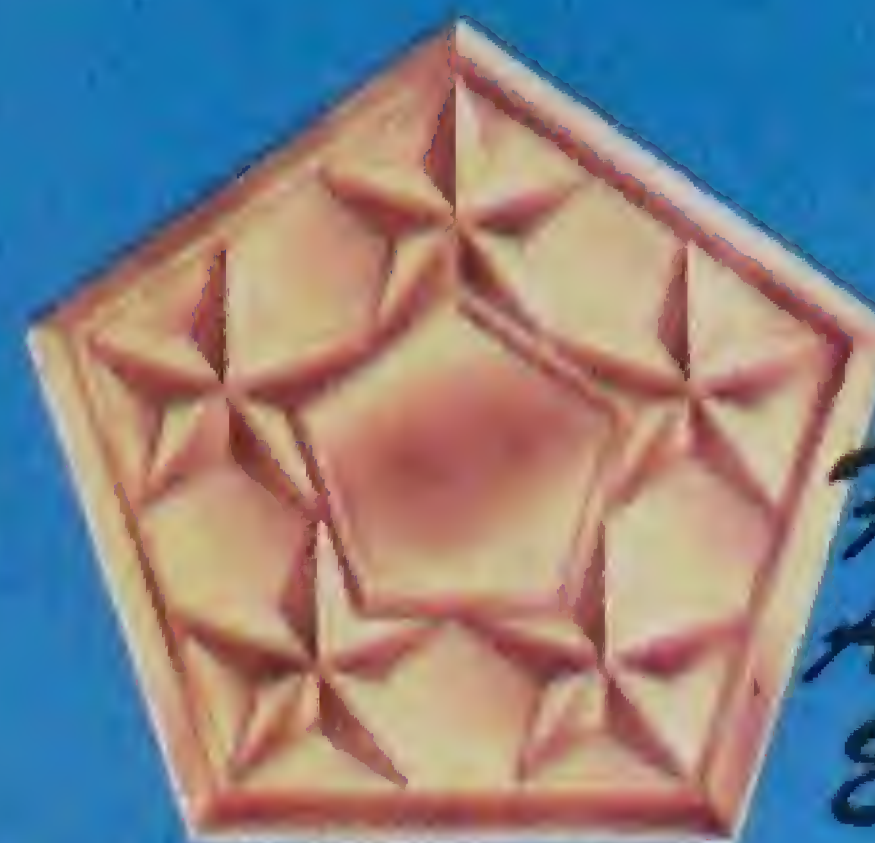
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1950-1959

THE PAST CENTURY

# Prosterity, growth come to Vacaville businesses

## Commerce takes great strides during the '50s

By Cynthia Roberts  
Special to The Reporter

When Walter Hansel came to town in 1946, World War II was behind the young veteran and his future as owner of the new Ford dealership in Vacaville stretched ahead.

The Ford Motor Co. celebrated its 50th anniversary in 1953, and Hansel sold 85 cars and trucks in two months to win a trip to Hawaii. Just seven years old, his agency was thriving, with 22 employees and a new branch at the Travis Air Force Base main gate. He had been elected to the City Council the year before.

The Stockton native was like many of the young men of the day, war veterans who were still young and ready to seize opportunity in a new frontier.

"All will be welcomed here as faith in the future of the city," proclaimed The Reporter in August 1950 in response to the remodeling and opening of Western Auto Supply, DePorta Plumbing and Heating, Western Ranch Supply and Vacaville Radiator Works.

Many more had faith. While established businesses such as Vacaville Creamery and Chandler's Furniture expanded, the young turks in town opened shop. Pacific Hardware was the creation of 32-year-old Bob Christenson, 29-year-old Arnold Clark and 40-year-old Al Jansen. All three went on to invest, build, sell and buy in and around Vacaville.

Stith Chevrolet Co. was thanked in a newspaper ad by

the dozen subcontractors who worked on the \$40,000 renovation of the new showroom on Dobbins Street in 1952, across the alley from the \$60,000 commercial and medical office building developed by Nick Ditto.

Toby's House of Fashion took the Main and Dobbins corner spot in Ditto's building in 1953 and stayed for 16 years before moving to Merchant Street.

California Sample Furniture decided Vacaville was the next location to open a new store in January 1953. Ex-Marine and Fairfield native Mike Gonzales was the 21-year-old manager of the new Vacaville store. He would soon be the Chamber of Commerce president and take a run at the City Council.

Merchant Street, with its new Bank of America branch in 1954, rapidly was becoming an important business district. Next door to Pacific Hardware, Vaca Village — considered a shopping center — had nine new tenants including Wat's Cookin restaurant, a barber shop, an insurance agency, a shoe repair store and a liquor store.

The most modern of supermarkets, Vacaville Grocery, opened what was then the largest, full-service market.

The Fabric Center opened in one of four new Merchant Street shops developed by L.M. Lindquist Real Estate in 1954. Pacific Hardware founders Clark and Jansen were already making plans to build a new laundry and dry cleaning plant next door to Vaca Village.

Merchant Street merchants were feeling their oats. They



even went so far as to start their own group, the Shopping Center Merchants Association of Vacaville.

On the 200 block of Main Street, Del McCune moved the house of Clyde Penaluna to make way for his new funeral home, McCune Garden Chapel.

Out on the highway, the Ranchotel, built by the Bergs, featured a western fashion interior that included cactus lamps.

Service stations, appliance shops, lumberyards, drug stores and dozens of other new spots opened or expanded in the golden growth of the 1950s.

As a sign of faith in Vacaville's

future, its now-established business leaders formed a new local bank in 1955.

Vaca Valley Bank on Parker Street was in the heart of downtown. It offered a meeting room upstairs. And being a modern as possible, the bank had a new innovation, a drive-through teller window.

A good local bank is nice, some said. But what a growing city really needs is a good Italian restaurant and a bowling alley.

Vacaville, the city of nearly 10,000 people in 1958, hit the lanes at Vaca Bowl and went out for pizza at the Mordaca family's new restaurant, Pietro's.

The Vacaville Grocery (left) opened in the fall of 1954 as what was then the largest, most modern supermarket. It is now the Canned Food Outlet at 911 Merchant St. Even breaking ground for a new business was big news. This photo from the Oct. 1, 1954, issue of The Reporter (below) shows Vacaville Mayor Albert Porter (center) stepping down on a shovel to break ground for D & E Drive-in restaurant owned by Eddie Achziger (left) and Dennis Loughlin (right). Carl Hoffman, Vacaville Chamber of Commerce manager, Tomas Garcia, chamber president, and M.L. Whaley, head of the real estate firm handling the land sale, also were on hand.

Reporter file photo



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A look back...  
1950-1959

## Jewelry Spotlight: Opal

The birthstone for October, opals are divided into three groups

1. common opals
2. fire opals
3. precious opals

The most identifying feature of precious and common opals is opalescence: a rainbow-like iridescence changing with the angle of observation. At one time, it was believed this was caused by the refraction of light from thin surface layers. In the 1960s, it was discovered opal is layered in a siliceous jelly which causes reflections and interferences in the stone's appearance.

All opals contain water. Although the content varies, there can be as much as 30% water within an individual stone. As the stone dehydrates, opalescence diminishes and the stone begins to crack. This disintegration can be temporarily staved by saturating the stone with oil or water. Opals are best stored in moist, absorbent cotton. This slows down the aging process considerably.

In Europe, the opal has long been believed to be unlucky. However, in Asia it stands for hope and loyalty. Fire opals are named after their orange coloration. They do not opalesce, and are usually milky. However, the best fire opals are transparent and clear. Two varieties of fire opals are Girasol and the Mexican Water Opal. The Girasol, Sun Opal, or "Sunflower," is almost colorless with the slightest bluish sheen and red play of color. The Mexican Fire Opal is a transparent colorless or slightly brown stone. Common opals are mostly opaque without any play of color. Different varieties of common opal include:

- ◆ agate opal — agate with amorphous opal layers
- ◆ hyalite — transparent and colorless
- ◆ wood opal — agatized wood
- ◆ honey opal — yellow
- ◆ milk opal — translucent, whitish, with a pearly luster
- ◆ porcelain opal — milky and opaque
- ◆ moss opal — contains dendrites
- ◆ cacholong, or mother-of-pearl opal — opaque to translucent, yellowish or white with a mother-of-pearl luster
- ◆ chrysopal or prase opal — opaque and apple green
- ◆ wax opal — yellow brown with a waxy luster
- ◆ hydrophane — precious opal which has lost its moisture, but has been temporarily rehydrated

Two types of precious opals have been distinguished: the black opal or the milky opal. Milky opals are found with a white or light basic color. The more uncommon black opals are gray black, dark green, dark blue, or dark grey. The deep black opal is rare.

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## Power named to GOP post

**R**obert H. Power, of Vacaville, a vice president of the California Republican Assembly, was elected state treasurer of the Assembly at the organization's convention held in Sacramento Saturday and Sunday.

Power is a member of the Solano County Republican Central Committee and a vice president of the state group. He served as chairman at the two-day convention.

Highlight of the convention was the endorsement of Assembly Speaker James W. Silliman for lieutenant governor, a position which is also being sought by Lt. Governor Harold J. Powers and Superior Judge Frederick F. Houser. Powers and Houser indicated later they will remain in the unusual three-way race for the Republican nomination in the June 8 primary.

Also in attendance at the convention from Vacaville were Wallace Brazelton, president of the Vacaville Republican Assembly, who was named state agricultural chairman for the convention and presided over the group which made its recommendations to the convention on agricultural problems. Bob Meyer, who was a director at large at the convention, and during one of the meetings held during the convention was elected regional director of the Sixth Congressional District.

The Reporter  
March 26, 1954

## Power to head California GOP

**R**obert Harbison Power of Vacaville became Mr. Republican of California for one year with his election last Sunday as new president of the California Republican Assembly. His election climaxed a two-day session held at Pasadena.

The election of Power, who at 29 became the youngest person ever to hold the position, came as no surprise to the large delegation. Assuming his new duties Sunday afternoon, he became the first person to fill the post from counties north of the Bay Area.

The Reporter  
March 25, 1955



Waitresses from the Nut Tree Restaurant (left) ready for their ride aloft when the Nut Tree Airport opened in 1955. But the famed black oak (below in a 1936 photo) and Nut Tree trademark came down in February 1951.

Reporter file photos

## Tree dies, airport takes flight

By Cynthia Roberts  
Special to The Reporter

**P**erhaps it was the constant rumble of cars on Highway 40 that made the Nut Tree's historic black walnut come down in February 1951.

But the demise of this famous tree only signaled the new growth headed towards the Nut Tree from the highway and the skies.

"More motor vehicles travel U.S. 40, the Lincoln Highway, over the Sierra than any other transcontinental traffic artery," concluded a California State Automobile Association report in August 1950.

The rumble from the highway was bringing more folks than ever to what had been just a roadside stop.

Hence, major expansion was underway in the mid-'50s when a unique building method — tilt-up concrete walls — was used to create a huge new addition to The Nut Tree.

With the small-scale train starting its run from the new toy shop in June 1953, aviation next found its place with



the opening of The Nut Tree Airstrip in the summer of 1955.

It was the first ride in an airplane for many of the 105 people, including a nervous looking group of Nut Tree waitresses, who rode in the four-passenger aircraft piloted by Ed Power on opening day.

"It will not be an uncommon remark to hear one say 'Let's drop in at the Nut Tree for a meal,'" noted The Reporter on July 15, 1955.

On the first Sunday, the airport welcomed 20 planes whose pilots and passengers came to have lunch or dinner at the Nut Tree.

A few more notes of interest if you can use them:

The flying bug bit Solano County in the 1950s. In addition to the opening of the Nut Tree Airport in July 1955, two other private flying facilities also opened.

The Vaca-Dixon Airport was located just up the highway for private pilots. At the west end of Vacaville, the newly opened Ranchotel was building its own airport in 1955 with a 2,300 foot-long, 75-foot-wide landing strip.

The Reporter  
Aug. 17, 1951

## A PART OF HISTORY

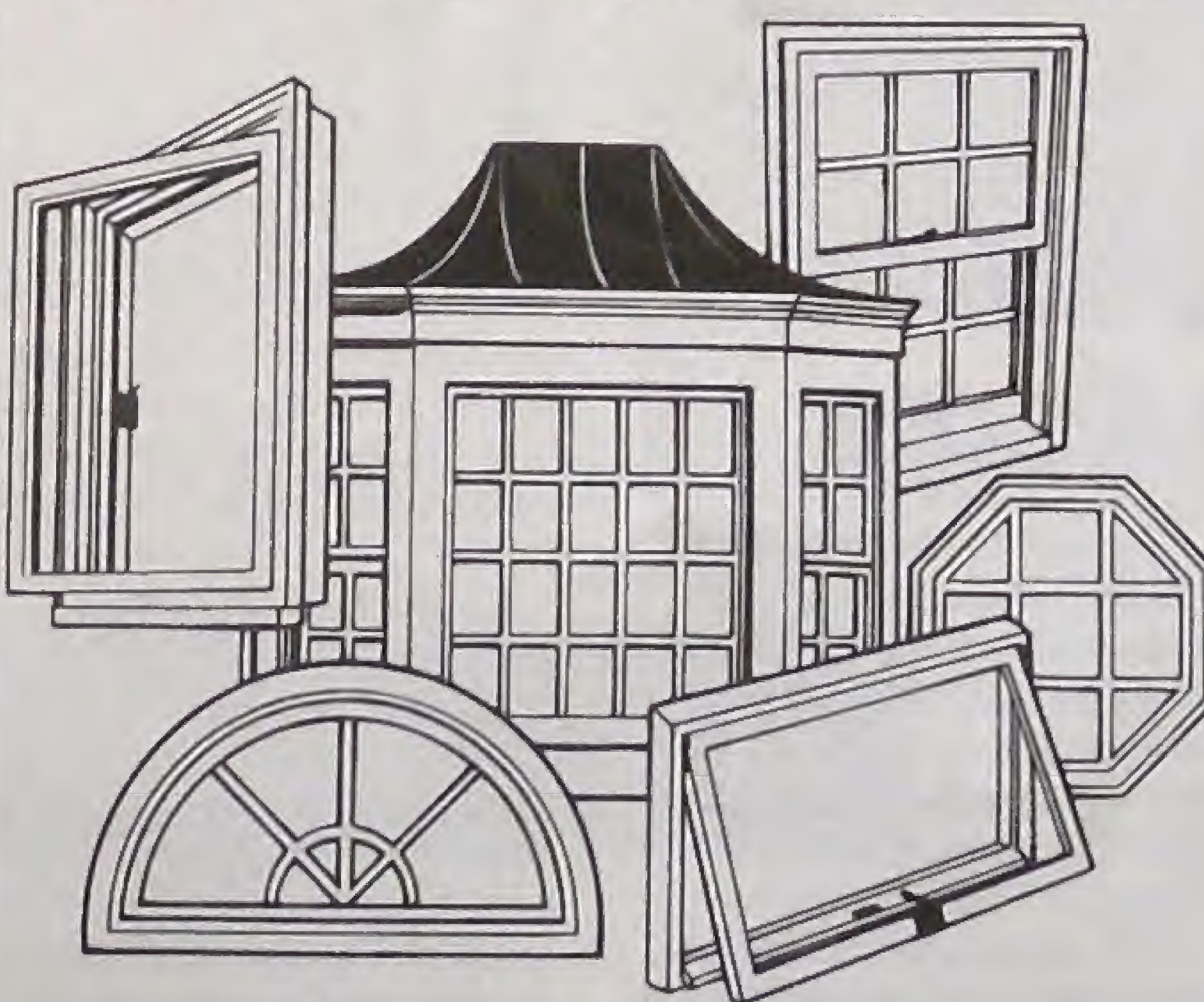
### "Always A Car Buff"



Ron and Juanita Wilson completely restored and raced their '58 corvette at Laguna Seca in 1998 to help raise money for Salinas Valley Memorial hospital. Racing this event was a thrill because it was also Corvette's 40<sup>th</sup> birthday of this model. The 1958 Corvette was the first year for dual head lights, chrome trunk strap and louvered hood — it was known as the "Hollywood Vette," because of its glitzy look! This model is one of the most sought after corvettes by avid collectors!

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# War is just start of more to come

A dark picture of the present world crisis into which the United States has engaged itself, was painted for members of the Vacaville Rotary Club at the regular weekly luncheon meeting at the Nut Tree on Thursday noon. Delivering the address was Dr. Victor Kaupas, assistant professor of social science at the State College in Sacramento. The doctor was introduced by Lieutenant St. Clair of the Fairfield-Suisun Air Force Base, who was acting for Major George Andrews, who was unable to be present. Vice president James McCrory presided at the meeting in the absence of President Fred Schooler, who is on vacation.

The speaker's address for the day did not deal in length on the Korean situation, but instead was a forecast of what might possibly happen in other sections of the Pacific area now that the Korean situation has arisen. Back of the strife which is engulfing the many small nations, is the activity of Russia, which by this tactical

method of fomenting internal strife, is putting to test the military strength of the United States, while keeping in reserve its own strength until the opportune time is at hand to strike.

Dr. Kaupas forecast a possible struggle in Germany, where the armies of the east sector would engage those of the west. He saw possibility of uprisings in other west European countries, as well as in the Balkan areas, including Italy.

The speaker said that although the picture he revealed looked rather dark, he was optimistic enough to believe that an all-out war would not be of long duration. It is his belief that the freedom-loving peoples of the world will band together to achieve rapid and ultimate victory, and that when the supreme test was at hand nations large and small would arise to combat their one enemy — Communistic Russia.

Bob Power was program chairman for the day.

The Reporter  
Aug. 4, 1950

## Death in Korea not confirmed

Private Charles Knecht, Vacaville, who was reported slightly wounded in action in Korea on September 21 and returned to his unit after a brief hospitalization, is now convalescing in a station hospital in a rear area. Reports last weekend that he had been killed in action have not been confirmed and inquiries by the parents, Major and Mrs. B.A. Knecht, and his wife, the former Iris Barty, have led them to "assume" that he is alive.

A War Department telegram to Private Knecht's parents early last week told that he had been slightly wounded and was being hospitalized. In a later letter to his parents he told that he

spent several days in a hospital for a head injury but was well enough to have rejoined his company in the 23rd Infantry Regiment of the Second Division.

The letter was followed by another dated October 11, telling that he was returned to a rear area station hospital in Korea to recover from other ailments, presumably the result of his first wound. At the time he was wounded, September 21, he was taking part in the battle around "Heartbreak Ridge."

Private Knecht, a senior at the local school last year, entered army service early this year.

The Reporter  
Oct. 19, 1951

## Local boy loses arm in action in Korea

Private First Class Ricardo Gloria, 23, has been listed as Vacaville's first casualty in ground action since the outbreak of the Korean War.

Last Saturday his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Gloria, residents of 236 Sacramento street for the past five years, were informed by letter that their son had lost his left arm in the battle zone and is now convalescing in a hospital in Tokyo. According to the letter to his parents, Pfc. Gloria gave no other details of the wounds, apparently believing his parents had earlier received official notification from the War Department.

The only information given was that his arm had been torn off just below the arm pit while serving near Hwach, near the 38th parallel, on August 31. He was on duty with Company E, 31st Infantry Regiment with the American Foreign Legion.

Pfc. Gloria attended the local high school and was employed at the local Basic plant at the time of his induction into Army service on September 27, 1950. He was one of four Vacaville youths in the first draft call following the outbreak of the war in Korea.

The Reporter  
Sept. 14, 1951

## Duncan missing in action

A letter received by Wyatt G. Duncan, Solano County agriculture inspector with offices in Vacaville, last week confirmed the contents of a telegram the previous week informing him that his son, Sgt. Wyatt G. Duncan Jr., 31, was reported missing in action in Korea.

Mr. and Mrs. Duncan, residents of Woodland, reported the last letter they had received from their son told of the Ameri-

can capture of Seoul and the march northward, before the Chinese Red Army began its big push. He was serving with the Second Engineers of the 2nd Division. He is a veteran of the Normandy invasion and assault landings in Pacific isles during World War II.

Sgt. Duncan's wife is living with his parents in Woodland. Her parents are Mr. and Mrs. Harry Morris of Dixon.

The Reporter  
Jan. 12, 1951

## Green with 7th Marines

Mr. and Mrs. R.E.L. Green of Vacaville are in receipt of a letter from their son, P.F.C. Kenneth R. Green that he is stationed with the 7th Marine Division in North Korea. Since his letter, dated November 27, that unit has been reported

encircled and is fighting for survival. A Marine reservist, he was recalled to active duty last September 13 and left for Korea a month later. His wife is at present residing with her mother, Mrs. Dorothy Frisbie.

The Reporter  
Dec. 8, 1950

## VACAVILLE MEN MISSING IN ACTION

### High School grads Next Week

#### B-29 Shot Down Over Enemy Territory; Crew Fate Unknown

### Vacaville Boy Dies In Action In Korea



Corporal Lawrence Bernard Keller became the first Vacaville death reported as the result of enemy ground action in Korea. His parents, Mr. and Mrs. Robert Keller, were informed in an official telegram this week of his death in action on November 29. He is pictured here near Heartbreak Ridge where he was wounded. He was previously, and since returning to front line duty, moved with his unit to more mountainous terrain in western Korea where he met his death north of the 38th parallel.

A brief telegram from the Secretary of the Army expressing "deep regret" that your son, Corporal Lawrence (Bernard) Keller, was killed in action in Korea on November 29, was received here Wednesday morning by Mr. and Mrs. Robert Keller at their home at 507 Williams street. It was dated December 4.

The message gave no other details except that Corporal Keller had started to duty from a previous wound that was not reported.

Death came to the 23-year-old Vacaville youth 11 months after he entered Army service and after five months of infantry combat duty in Korea. On September 21, he was wounded in the head and was reported to be in a hospital in a rear area. He was again injured and returned to duty in the same hospital in a rear area.

Several days ago Mr. and Mrs. Keller received a letter from their only son, dated November 29, in which he told he had moved to the rear area station hospital in the 23rd Infantry Regiment of the Second Division. He was serving in the 31st Infantry Regiment, Company E, and Battalion, 31st Infantry Division. In his letter he stated there was a "big fight" in the "back of the line" and he was "in the thick of it."

For his service in the past few months, Corporal Keller was promoted to the rank of sergeant and awarded the Combat Infantryman's Badge and Korean Service Ribbon with two campaign stars. He was an automatic rifleman.

Corporal Keller was a native of Acton, Mass., and had resided here with his parents for the past ten years. Following his graduation from the Vacaville high school in the class of 1947, he was employed at the Vacaville Steam Laundry until his army induction. Later he is employed at the Basic plant.



Elmira Brothers Seriously Hurt When Dynamite Cap Explodes

Elmira Brothers, who were seriously hurt when a dynamite cap exploded, are being treated in a hospital in a rear area. The explosion occurred while they were working on a construction project. The brothers are being treated for injuries sustained in the explosion.

#### VITAL STATISTICS

CLARENCE, the wife of Arnold Clark, Vacaville, a daughter, Laura, deceased, at Fairfield Hospital, on June 5.

ROBERT, the wife of Staff Sergeant William Joseph Hunt, Vacaville, a son, William Joseph Hunt, born at Torrey, on June 7, 1951.

#### New \$2 Million

The black irony of war is clear when in the June 8, 1951, issue of The Reporter (above) there is a story of missing Staff Sgt. Melvin Joseph Hunt and a notice announcing the birth of a son to Hunt and his wife. Another story in the Dec. 7, 1951, Reporter (left) tells of the first death of a Vacaville man in the Korean War.

## Three Vaca men missing in action

Hope for the safety of their husbands is yet hanging in thin threads for three

Vacaville Air Force wives following the frozen announcements received early this week that the three men were members of an 11-man crew of a B-29 shot down while on an official mission over enemy territory in Korea.

To the wives of Captain Joseph L. Korstjens, Staff Sergeant Melvin Joseph Hunt and Staff Sergeant Charles W. Crocker, Jr., the heart-rending news means an agony of waiting for further word to follow the telegrams which were brief, listing them only as "missing while on an official mission." There was no indication as to what may be expected but the families have considered the slim chances and have prepared themselves for the worst.

To Vacaville citizenry the news brought the current war closer to home in triple doses. These have been the community's first casualties.

Late Monday evening the Reporter had begun to reconstruct the story from bits gathered locally and from the exchange of information with the Public Information Officer

## B-29 shot down over Korea

at Travis Air Base. Although at present there is nothing more official than the information contained in the telegrams to the three wives, it appears the B-29 was on its mission when "a jet finder hit them." Members of accompanying American aircraft were said to have seen the doomed plane plunge toward the earth and four parachutes were seen floating in enemy territory. The exact place and date have not been learned.

The first bit of official information was obtained from Mrs. Ann Korstjens at her home in Vaca Valley Village. Dated June 2, the telegram was sent to her by the commanding officer of Fairchild Air Force Base, Washington, reading as follows:

"Dear Mrs. Ann Korstjens: The Secretary of the Air Force expressed regrets and has asked me to inform you that your husband, Captain Joseph W. Korstjens, a member of a B-29 crew, has been reported missing while on an official mission in Korea. Details are not known at this time. Information will be forwarded you immediately upon receipt by this head-

quarters. Please inform Mrs. Smith that her husband was not aboard ship but is on his way to the United States.

Commanding Officer Fairchild AFB, Washington."

The telegram was received by Mrs. Korstjens on Monday; also on Monday the information had been relayed to Mrs. Crocker by her mother-in-law, Mrs. Charles W. Crocker, Sr., in a telephone call from Corvallis, Oregon. Aware that Sgts. Crocker and Hunt were both members of the same plane crew in the 343rd Bomb Squadron (Medium), Mrs. Crocker left her ranch home here to tell Mrs. Hunt, who resides at the Sunrise Trailer Park. On Monday at the local post office, Mrs. Hunt received her telegram which was identical to that sent to Mrs. Korstjens, except that it did not refer to Lt. Smith.

As far as can be gathered, Sergeants Crocker and Hunt shared the same plane assignment from the time they left Travis on April 30. A Vallejo lieutenant was also known to be on that crew. No information was made available as to why Captain Korstjens, who was not

a member, was on that plane. In all probability he was sent along as aircraft commander or as co-pilot, or perhaps an observer.

Captain Korstjens, who has been in the Far East since leaving Travis on February 11, was serving in the same crew as Lt. Malcolm Smith, referred to in the telegram to Mrs. Korstjens, who makes his home with his wife and daughter on Merchant street. As it turned out, Lt. Smith landed at Travis on Monday, about the same time the telegram did. For security reasons he was silent on questions of the military incidents while he was at home Tuesday "feeling very tired" as the result of events and the long flight. His story was told to the public information officer.

Whether or not there were any survivors of the ill-fated plane may not be known for some time. Any survivors would undoubtedly be held prisoners. Meanwhile the empty waiting for further news was becoming unbearable for the three Vacaville wives of the missing men. One remarked sobbing, "Who said there's no war?" But all are bearing up well through the anxious moments.

The Reporter  
June 8, 1951

## Hopes for local airmen dim as list released

The scanning of lists released during the past two days by the North Korean and Chinese Communists left but very dim hopes that three Vacaville Air Force men, previously reported missing in action, might still be alive.

The three men, reported missing with an 11-man crew when their B-29 was shot down early last June while on an official mission over enemy territory in Korea, were Captain Joseph W. Korstjens, S/Sgt. Melvin J. Hunt and S/Sgt. Charles W. Crocker. Their wives were informed at the time at their homes here that nothing could be learned further about their fate.

Shortly before noon yesterday, the Reporter learned that Mrs. Korstjens and Mrs. Hunt were in receipt of telegrams not-

ing that their husbands' names were not on any of the prisoner of war lists. No report had been received from Mrs. Crocker, but it is expected the fate of the three men would have been the same.

The telegram received by Mrs. Korstjens (similar to that of Mrs. Hunt) read: "We have received a list of names from the North Koreans and Chinese Communists believed to be Air Force personnel who are prisoners. I regret the name of your husband, Captain Joseph W. Korstjens, who is now missing, was not, repeat, not included in the list. Resources of the United Nations and the United States Government are presently being utilized to obtain verification of the status of all our personnel who are now officially reported as missing. When further

information is received, you will be notified immediately. The Air Force shares your anxiety and hopes. Maj. Gen. John H. McCormack, Director of Military Personnel, Headquarters, USAF, Washington, D.C."

The only hope remaining for the three men is in the possible inaccuracy of the lists. It was never learned whether the ill-fated plane had made a safe landing. They were stationed at Travis at the time they left for the Far East on April 30. The three wives received telegrams on June 2, telling of the missing B-29. Reports that several members were seen to parachute out of the riddled bomber were not confirmed.

The Reporter  
Dec. 21, 1951



1950-1959

THE PAST CENTURY

# TRAVIS' ATOMIC AGE



Several Air Force investigators search through the wreckage of Brig. Gen. Robert Travis' B-29 in August 1950.

Reporter file photos

## Hero's tragic death leads to new name

By Julie Davidow  
Staff Writer

When the B-29 bomber carrying Brig. Gen. Robert Travis burst into flames shortly after takeoff from the Fairfield-Suisun Air Force Base on Aug. 5, 1950, witnesses compared the scene to an atomic holocaust.

Fresh from the blasts over Japan that ended World War II in the Pacific and set to embark on a three-year battle with communism in Korea, Americans in 1950 saw the potential for nuclear destruction everywhere.

But despite cover-ups and denials from the Air Force, the imagery invoked to describe the crash that took the lives of 19 people was right on.

The plane carried parts of an atomic weapon on what was to be a secret mission to Guam — a fact the Air Force, formed just a few years earlier from the Army Air Forces, denied for more than four decades.

Almost 10 minutes after the aircraft came to rest near a Fairfield trailer park, an explosion heard almost 30 miles away rocked the surrounding area.

Patrons at a drive-in movie theater fled, "thinking that an atomic bomb had been dropped on the base." The explosion damaged 48 trailers, 20 cars, a private home, a commercial garage, four store windows and 10 acres of private property.

Insisting the aircraft was on a routine training mission to Omaha, the Air Force deemed

the explosion the result of 8,000 gallons of gasoline on board.

With the cause of the crash obscured, military officials focused instead on the loss of Travis.

Local writers ate up tales of Travis' bravery in combat missions over Nazi-occupied Europe during World War II, eulogizing him in the pages of *The Reporter* and offering extensive coverage of the base's renaming ceremony on April 20, 1951.

Undeterred by the tragedy, newly anointed Travis Air Force Base grew at exponential rates in the years following the crash. Construction projects on base in the early 1950s — totaling \$34.7 million — propelled what had been a lonely military outpost into the "Gateway to the Pacific," with nearly 20,000 civilian and military personnel by the 1960s.

Reports of a nuclear presence at the base were consistently denied, and Vacaville latched on to the burgeoning base as another example of the region's healthy growth. A Chamber of Commerce brochure published in 1953 featured an aerial photo of downtown Vacaville flanked by pictures of four nearby projects — the California Medical Facility, Monticello Dam, Basic Vegetables and Travis Air Force Base.

Base officials did deal head-on with another fear plaguing Travis' neighbors in the 1950s, offering explanations published in *The Reporter* about the benign nature of sonic booms.

## Woman given award for losing leg in crash

A \$40,000 settlement was accepted Tuesday by a Vacaville resident, Mrs. Frances Mae Sherrill, 32, of her suit against the government for the loss of a leg caused by a plane crash at Travis Air Force Base in 1950.

Mrs. Sherrill, who now resides at her family home at 401 Pecan Street, was living at Travis with her airman husband August 5, 1950, when a B-29 crashed near her trailer home.

A piece of flying metal mangled Mrs. Sherrill's right leg and it was amputated below the knee.

The crash resulted in the deaths of 17 crewmen, passengers, and firefighters and injuries to 60. Among those

killed was Brig. Gen. Robert F. Travis, then commander of Fairfield-Suisun Air Force Base, which was later renamed in his honor.

Mrs. Sherrill had sued the government for \$125,000 in the court of Federal District Judge Michael J. Roche in San Francisco, but accepted the government offer in the fourth day of the trial.

Hers was the second settlement growing out of the accident. A third claim of \$133,000 is pending.

Since moving to Vacaville, Mrs. Sherrill has been manager of Johnnie's Steak Ranch at the Skyline Club on Highway 40.

*The Reporter*  
May 1, 1953



Brig. Gen. Robert Travis, a World War II hero, was killed with 18 other people on Aug. 5, 1950, when his B-29 crashed. The Air Force base near Fairfield was renamed after him.



A restored B-29, the same type of plane Brig. Gen. Robert Travis flew, is located at the museum on Travis Air Force Base.

## Contest win means command

In conjunction with the Kiwanis-Air Force sponsored Annual Kids Day celebration at Travis Air Force Base Saturday, September 27, the Base has added an event for the local boys and girls.

It is a "Name the Planes" contest, winners to be named "commanders" for a day of the various Air Force units. Eligibles include all children in the

4th through 8th grades living in Solano County. Contestants may clip the entry blank appearing in this paper, fill it in properly and mail it to the Office of Information Services, Travis AFB. Entries must be postmarked prior to midnight, September 22, 1958, and received prior to 5 p.m., Tuesday, September 23.

*The Reporter*  
Sept. 19, 1958

## Vacaville hero earns acclaim

The six-hour land-or-else struggle of Major Samuel W. Tyson in the successful landing of a crippled MATS C97 plane in Hilo, Hawaii, with 66 other persons aboard must have been an extreme tax of his energies and nerves on Thursday of last week.

But the task of piloting the plane just above the waters of the cold Pacific for 1,000 miles was nothing but routine compared to the ordeal he was to face in the days immediately following. Overnight, he became a national figure.

The following night, Friday, Major Tyson began a flight back to Travis (Air Force Base) for a round of applause and acclaim. Less than an hour out at sea the plane returned to Hawaii slightly crippled. While he waited for his return, he accepted telephone requests for television appearances and conferences with Air Force officials.

The return was finally made and Saturday morning there was a joyful reunion with his family at

their home on 236 Arbor street. Later in the afternoon, after frequent interruptions in his sleep and rest, he prepared for a drive to Travis and a flight to New York.

Minutes before his 6 p.m. departure here, he posed for a Reporter photographer with members of his family and confided to a reporter that he was suffering a severe case of nerves. He was worrying over his scheduled television appearances. Then he bid goodbye to his wife, Jean, and their two children, Sam Jr., 11, and Toni, 9, and Mrs. Tyson's mother, Mrs. Lily Waggener, who is visiting here from Burbank.

Major Tyson described the experiences of his miraculous flight to millions of viewers on the television program of Ed Sullivan on Sunday night and Dave Garroway on Monday morning. Later he was to accept the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Force's highest honor, for the third time in his flying career.

*The Reporter*  
Aug. 16, 1957

## Missile base added to Travis defenses

A fast-moving defense construction program began this week with the start of the actual excavation on the \$2,430,000 Bomarc base near Dixon.

In the past few weeks, the contractor, Zarpas-Fullerton of Detroit, has moved a project trailer onto the Otto Sievers ranch four miles north of Dixon, has staked the layout, and has begun excavating for the base pads under the 28 launching shelters which will house the Bomarc missiles.

Other work which is to be started immediately includes the construction of a project office for personnel of the corps of engineers and Boeing Aircraft Company, the firm which manufactures the Bomarc missile, and the installation of the main entrance road to the launcher area.

Other work will follow, including a composite building at 26,000 square feet, water and petroleum

systems, fire station assembly and maintenance buildings, and personnel accommodations.

It is expected that about 100 men will be employed during peak construction, many of whom will be hired locally. Norman Solatar, the project superintendent for the prime contractor, has taken up residence in the Sacramento area while Virgil M. Shinn, the project administrator, is leasing a home in the Dixon area.

Considerable concrete work is expected to follow the excavation for the launching shelters. Each base pad will be 24 inches thick and the launching shelters will measure 60 by 22 feet. The walls, topped with movable roofs, will also be of heavy concrete.

The shelters are so designed that when the roof sections are actuated the loaded missiles will automatically rise to a firing position.

*The Reporter*  
Dec. 4, 1959

## Air Force being urged to build academy here

Congressman Robert L. Condon (D-Calif.) this week urged the Air Force to carefully consider locating the Air Force's Academy in Solano county.

The Air Force Academy bill is still pending but according to Condon, should soon be approved and signed by the President.

Solano county is preparing to make available to the Air Force a tract of land containing 22,000 acres. It is located a mile away from Travis Air Force Base, the largest Army Air Base on the Pacific Coast. It has an ideal climate and flying is possible in that area practically every day of the year. The property in question is only a few miles from San

Francisco and the University of California at Berkeley. It is served by two railroads and the main transcontinental interstate highways. All utilities are present on the site and the area, which is relatively level with some rolling hills, would make a beautiful campus.

Condon wrote General Hubert Harmon and General Carl Spaatz urging them to give full consideration to the Solano county site in the event Congress approves and the President signs the Air Force Academy bill. Generals Spaatz and Harmon will be consulted by the Secretary as to the location of the academy.

*The Reporter*  
March 19, 1954

## Atomic warfare studied at nearby Travis base

Atomic warfare and research is the subject of an eight-hour course of instruction now under way at Travis Air Force Base.

Designed to familiarize all officers and airmen of the base with the problems connected with atomic research, radiological safety plays a large part in the course. The hazards of atomic warfare and the prescribed defense measures are covered in the lectures and training films and give the students a clearer picture of just what the atomic bomb is and does.

Taught by Captain Robert C. Olson, each class consists of

approximately twenty airmen and officers and meets for one hour each day Monday through Friday.

A few selected personnel will continue with this course of instruction to become more familiar with the theory of the atom bomb, its manufacture, functions, hazards, effects, means of detecting radiations, defensive measures, and treatment of injuries. They will receive practical experience in the use of various detection instruments and be prepared to act as monitors in the event of radiological warfare.

*The Reporter*  
Nov. 17, 1950



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## Millennium Sports Club Vacaville

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#### 6:30 Cocktail Hour with Hors d'oeuvres

anti pasta, fresh fruit with gourmet cheese, chilled prawns, smoked salmon platter, sausage bites, assorted chicken wings.

#### 7:30 Buffet Dinner (all you can eat)

Chicken marsala, teriyaki sirloin, prawns, pesto caesar salad, oven roasted potatoes, fresh sauteed vegetables, roll and dessert.

#### 8:30 Dance to the "BOOMERS"

The Bay Area's hottest live band playing music from the 60's-90's

#### All Evening - No Host Bar

#### Champagne Toast and Party Favors - Midnight

\*Ask about the hotel and shuttle package!!

**PLAN AHEAD...Buy your tickets now!**

Before August 31.....\$125 per person  
Sept. 1 - Sept. 30 .....\$135 per person  
Oct. 1 - Oct 31.....\$145 per person  
After Oct. 31.....\$155 per person



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1950-1959

THE PAST CENTURY

# 'Finest' school built

By Barbara Smith  
Special to The Reporter

After more than two years of planning and a year of construction, the doors of the new Vacaville High School were flung open Sept. 10, 1952, for the fall term.

The new building was the pride of Vacaville. The Reporter described it as "one of the finest in California."

Vacaville kids and teachers shook off the dust of the old, two-story frame high school on School Street that had served their parents and grandparents, and settled into a bright new environment on West Monte Vista Avenue.

The new school boasted 18 classrooms, a double-sized library and study hall, two domestic science rooms, a photographic darkroom, a large room for both arts projects and mechanical drawing, an agricultural room, a general shop and the administrative offices.

The gym was impressive with a full-size basketball court, folding bleachers, dressing areas, showers and locker rooms "for both boys and girls."

There were even two small orchards of peaches and grapes for the agricultural classes.

The entire complex, which sat on a 29.5-acre site purchased from Ed Uhl, was cleared of condemned buildings and unneeded trees and vines to make way



Students in 1956 work on experiments in the new Vacaville High School chemistry laboratory.

for construction.

Among the materials used was a high base of poured concrete and 150 tons of steel. The school was built to accommodate 425 students. By October 1956 — just four years later — expansion was under way to accommodate 700 students. In the 1998-99 school year, 1,897 students attended Vacaville High School and another 2,030 attended the city's second high school, Will C. Wood.

Efforts to build a new school began in early 1950, when the need was considered urgent. The old, wooden high school was overcrowded and considered a firetrap. The 30-year old brick annex, used as a gymnasium, had been condemned by state officials as "unsafe." And the student population of Vacaville was growing by leaps and bounds.

The \$892,000 needed for the new school was secured through state funds and two school bonds. The community effort was led by Lemoine E. Williams,

high school principal and district superintendent.

In July 1952, just as the new high school was completed, Williams surprised members of the school board by resigning from his position, even though his contract with the district was not due for renewal for another year.

Williams, who had been principal and superintendent for 20 years, apparently had decided on a career change after realizing one of his goals. The Reporter said, "... his fondest dream under his administration was the completion of a modern, new high school."

Williams stayed on the faculty, teaching science and math. Harold Youngblood was named the new high school principal and superintendent immediately following Williams' resignation. The football stadium at Vacaville High is named after Youngblood, who died in 1959.

As soon as construction began on the new high school, the city turned its eye on the 6.2-

acre site of the old school grounds, which consisted of the frame building constructed in 1897, the brick annex, an agriculture building and shop-Quonset hut.

The property was considered ideal for a city hall, recreation center, public playground and park. Negotiations commenced between the school district and city officials for the purchase.

During negotiations, the brick annex was destroyed by fire. The fire was so hot that the steel roof supports bent into "pretzel-like shapes." The origin of the fire, one of the city's worst, was unknown.

The destruction of the brick annex reduced the value of the property, but did little to solve problems that had arisen over the terms and conditions of a simple contract between the school district and city officials. It became necessary for a special election to be held to facilitate the purchase of the property for a civic center. The site eventually would be Andrews Park.

## Vacaville mourns loss of Youngblood

Death made its claim on the active and useful life of one of Vacaville's most prominent citizens, Harold Basil Youngblood, early Monday evening at the University of California Hospital in San Francisco. He was 48.

Funeral services, under the direction of McCune Garden Chapel, were held yesterday (Thursday), afternoon at the Community Presbyterian Church, with the Reverend Henry B. MacFadden officiating. A period of mourning during separate services held at the same time was proclaimed at the Vacaville high school where he had served as district superintendent since 1952. Interment was on the Vacaville-Elmira cemetery.

Ironically, it was the ravages of cancer that outraced him at the pinnacle of his career. He became a victim of the disease several months after completing his term as president of the Solano County Branch of the American Cancer Society. He had previously served as chairman of the Vacaville unit at the time of his death.

Left to mourn his death is his widow Mrs. Occo Youngblood, at the family home at 360 Luzena avenue. She is a second grade teacher at Alamo school.

Also surviving him are his mother, Mrs. G.M. Youngblood of Dallas, Texas; a brother, George R. Youngblood, also of Dallas; and two sisters, Mrs. Ruth LeClerque of Dallas and Mrs. Louise Newman of Edgewood, Texas.

Mr. Youngblood was born in Grand Saline, Texas, on October 22, 1911. He received his BS degree from East Texas State College in 1939 and his MA degree from the College of the Pacific in 1951. He served 40 months in the Air Force during World War II and was dis-

charged from active duty at Travis Air Force Base in 1946.

After military service, he taught the following term as eighth grade teacher in the Vacaville schools. Then followed two years in the audiovisual department of the Solano county superintendent of schools' office and four years as principal of Elm school. He served as superintendent of the Vacaville high school district from 1952 until the time of his death.

Just as he was given mention in Who's Who in American Education in 1951, he became a leader in public and community services.

He served as president of the Vacaville Lions Club and last year completed his term as governor of District 4B-3 for Lions Clubs in northern California and as such he made official visits to more than 70 clubs in the district in one year.

In education, he was a member of Phi Delta Kappa, honorary scholastic society, and area director of the California Association of Secondary School Administrators.

He was an elder of the Vacaville Community Presbyterian church; a member of Royal Arch Masons No. 43, Knights Templar No. 38, Order of Eastern Star No. 28, Lodge 870 F&AM of Edgewood, Texas; Odd Fellows Lodge of Willis Points, Texas; and Rago-Christopher Post 165, American Legion.

Friends have been asked to send memorial gifts to American Cancer Society, the Shriners' Crippled Children's Society or the Community Presbyterian Church Memorial Fund.

Active Pallbearers at yesterday's services were Gilbert Fogarty, Roy Cobble, Sr., Noland Bagley, James McCrory, Kenneth Glines, and George Gammon.

The Reporter  
Nov. 6, 1959



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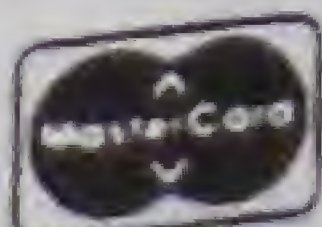
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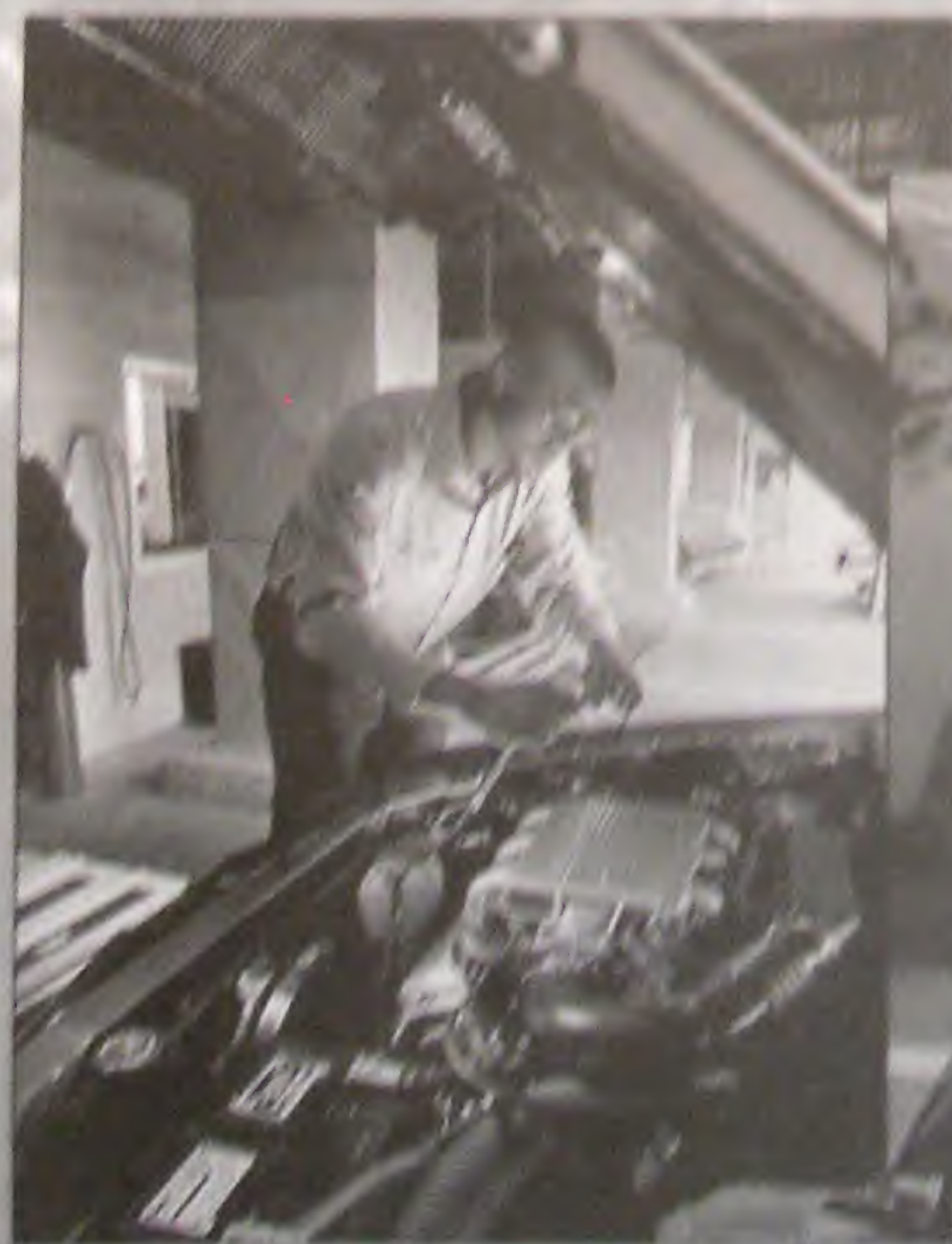


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*Sincerely,*  
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*President & Client  
Portfolio Manager*



1950-1959

THE PAST CENTURY

## Recreation needs grow along with rest of Vacaville

By Cynthia Roberts  
Special to The Reporter

**B**oys and Girls Club director Bert Hughes had a big problem on his hands in 1957.

A total of 586 boys and girls turned out for the first nine meetings of the Boys Club, which met three times week, and the Girls Club, which met two times a week.

The old high school's agricultural building in Andrews Park was hardly big enough for the gathering. And Hughes was facing a 44 percent budget cut because the Community Chest fund drive did not meet its goal.

Having a park and a place for the city's growing group of youngsters was a new challenge, which appeared about the same time school enrollment was topping 2,000 students in 1956.

The sale of the old high school site to the city as a future park was overwhelmingly supported by the voters in 1953.

Children in a town of less than 3,000 had open spaces to play and just enough civic events to entertain.

But at the start of 1950s, playing and recreating in a more organized fashion was becoming a concern as the population raced to nearly 7,000 in 1956.

In July 1953, a special children's room was established within the Vacaville Carnegie Library, the first major change since it opened in 1915.

The children's section was located downstairs on the west side with kid-sized furniture. And the collection of books for younger readers was expanded.

Outdoor park space was being talked about in the early '50s but not much was being done.

In August 1951, Police Chief Elmer King landscaped the small circle around his department's flag pole with grass and a sign reading "city park, let's make it bigger and better."

The old high school site was renamed Andrews Park, but

efforts to raise money for improvements didn't get rolling until 1959.

The city formed a committee in 1954 to look at the city recreation needs. Although a commission eventually was formed that year with representatives from the city and the elementary and high schools, the problem was finances.

The Youth Council headed by Eleanor Nelson had its own series of activities for youngsters, from dominoes and swimming lessons to Little League and Babe Ruth baseball leagues. But again much of it depended on private donations.

A Quonset building in Andrews Park did get some much needed remodeling in 1956 with the addition of restrooms and a kitchen.

Finally in 1957, the city of Vacaville took on the job of public recreation, approving its first budget of \$13,076, which included a position for a full-time director.

Summer programs also included activities at local school yards, plus winter basketball and folk dancing. Still, despite all this action, the city recreation department lacked its own funds and depended on schools and the Community Chest to pay its bill.

Vacaville city boosters really got behind recreation at the end of the 1950s when a successful drive to build a new public swimming pool at Vacaville High School was completed.

The \$60,000 project was supported by the city with business leaders, through the Chamber of Commerce, pledging to raise \$25,000.

The pool committee reached their goal when Basic Vegetable Products kicked in the last \$10,000.

Meanwhile, discussions continued on funding lights at the new middle school, a playground, barbecue pits, sidewalks and a sprinkler system for Andrews Park. Volunteer help was encouraged.



The Saturday Club float passes through the Fiesta Days parade in 1959, the first year the event was called merely Fiesta Days.

# VIVA FIESTA!

## Fiesta Days begins to gain steam

By Barbara Smith  
Special to the Reporter

**C**elebrating Vacaville's western and Hispanic past goes much further back in time than the most recent Fiesta Days.

It goes back to a time nearly a half-century ago, when Vacans came together to celebrate the city's 100th anniversary.

"It's Fiesta Time in Vaca Valley" was the theme of the Vacaville Centennial Fiesta in late September 1950. The three-day birthday party to celebrate the city's auspicious beginning would set the stage for future fiestas that continue to this day.

Vacaville's Allied Council, headed by president Richard E. Coffey, served as the steering committee for the original fiesta. Coffey roped in local civic organizations and clubs to form a Centennial Fiesta committee.

Mayor Albert Porter set "Sept. 29, 30, and Oct. 1 as Vacaville Centennial Fiesta Days, and request all residents to wear Spanish, Indian, Western, or any costumes appropriate in the commemoration of the last 100 years."

During the celebration, events were held at the Elm school playground and at the high school. The Lions Club put on both a street dance at Elm, featuring The Californians, an eight-piece orchestra, and a grand ball at the high school, with music by Frank Porcella and his 11-piece orchestra.

A "historical pageant" with a cast of 200 enacting "main eras of what is known of Vaca Valley, from the wilderness, to the Indian and Spanish, to the cowboys, to the new eras," was staged at Elm.

With a cast of the Bay Area's leading Spanish entertainers dancing and singing, a Spanish Show was held in the high school gym.

A queen's contest, horse show, carnival, sporting events and a Kiddie and Pet Parade were other events staged by early Fiesta volunteers.

The "mammoth parade" was sponsored and organized by Fire



A band marches in the 1959 Fiesta Days parade (above), while women dressed in Western wear are handed prizes during a Fiesta Days event.

## Vaca Valley Raceways opens for first event

**J**uly 5 will mark the opening of the new one-half million dollar Vaca Valley Raceways when the San Francisco Region of the Sports Car Club of America will sanction two days of sports car road races on Saturday and Sunday during the coming Fourth of July weekend.

This new racing facility, located on a 200-acre site three miles east of the Nut Tree restaurant off Highway 40 near Vacaville, is the second track in the state to be built for sports car racing, Laguna Seca being the first.

Now under construction by Syar and Harms of Sacramento, the raceway is the first in the nation to incorporate a mile and a quarter oval, a 4,500 foot drag strip and a sports car road track. Indianapolis type cars, sprint cars, midgets, dragsters, and sports cars, will compete at this new western race center.

Unique in design the sports car section features a three-quarter mile straightaway followed by a 1,000 foot diameter banked turn, then into a 185 degree horseshoe curve. A series of six additional turns with varied straightaways will complete the 2.1 mile course.

The sports car track was designed in cooperation with the Sports Car Club of America for maximum driver and spectator safety. According to Harry Burd, of Vacaville, general manager, this will not only be the safest but the fastest track in the nation and he expects 30,000 fans to bear him witness come July 5 and 6.

Parking for over 15,000 cars, sanitary facilities, concession areas, and grandstand seating, a rarity of sports car race enthusiasts will assure spectator comfort during the two day event.

The Reporter  
June 13, 1958

## 300 race at track's opening

**T**o the delight of several thousands of spectators who bronzed under the sun most of the day, more than 300 of the hottest hotrodders in California and Nevada turned out last Monday to inaugurate the Northern California Drag Strip, six miles northeast of Vacaville.

The success of the venture, the product of owners Royce Ratterman and Harry Burd, points to the certainty that drag racing is here to stay.

No accurate count was taken of the number of spectators who witnessed the events during the day, but state drag racing officials pronounced it one of the largest turnouts for drag racing in Northern California.

Shortly after 1 p.m. Vacaville Mayor Albert Porter cut the ribbon of the strip to signal the start of elimination runs.

The Reporter  
Sept. 7, 1956

Chief Warren Hughes and the Vacaville Fire Department. Firefighters would organize the parade for the next 40 years.

Even though the original organizers declared the a fiesta to be an annual event, it would be eight years before interest in the community celebration was renewed. This time, the name of the celebration would change, but not the theme.

"Vacaville Western Fiesta," held from July 7 to July 13, 1958, included a rodeo held at the new high school grounds and a square-dance festival at the Bank of America parking lot on Parker Street.

Many events moved to Andrews Park, including the community barbecue, the queen's contest and a tug of war over a mud puddle. Andrews Park today remains the stage for many Fiesta Days events.

New traditions were born during the 1958 fiesta. The Whiskerino contest was a big hit. Men caught clean shaven were locked into a makeshift jail set up downtown. Western and Hispanic decorations began appearing on downtown storefronts. Even homes were decorated in the spirit of the season. The entire City Council met in regular session dressed in full fiesta regalia.

An estimated 10,000 people watched the 1958 Fiesta Days parade. Leading the parade were Joseph and John Pena, great-great-grandsons of two of Vacaville's founders, Manuel Vaca and John Pena.

The name of the 1959 celebration was shortened to "Fiesta Days" and has remained so for 40 years.

While hundreds of Vacans have served on Fiesta Days committees, several residents have made notable contributions in preserving the traditions and spirit of the celebration.

John and Nicha Vasquez and family have been volunteering at

annual fiestas for over 35 years. John Vasquez has served as general chairman twice, and the family was honored as grand marshals of the parade in 1988. The award-winning Vasquez Family Float remains a highlight of the Fiesta Days parade.

Tom McNunn served on the Fiesta Days committee from 1966 to 1995, acted as general chairman three times, and was honored as grand marshal of the Fiesta Days parade in 1990.

Hershel Smith, a fiesta volunteer since 1976, served as general chairman twice, and was parade marshal in 1983. In 1994, Smith organized a reunion banquet at the Nut Tree restaurant in which every past general chairman, parade marshal, and queen since 1958 were honored.

While the name of the celebration has changed, from "Centennial Fiesta" to "Western Fiesta" and to "Fiesta Days," the traditions and spirit remains the same.



1950-1959

THE PAST CENTURY

# Fire department growth sparked in '50s

## Volunteers help build new station

By Brian Hamlin  
Staff Writer

After decades of wandering from building to building in old downtown Vacaville, the city's volunteer Fire Department dedicated its first built-from-the-ground-up firehouse in March 1958.

As described in The Reporter on March 28, 1958, the new fire station was a state-of-the-art marvel, complete with electrically operated doors and a bar.

"Besides a large equipment room, the building contains a large meeting room for the firemen with large fireplace and built-in bar; an elaborately equipped kitchen with built-in ovens and ranges and a dishwasher; restrooms for men and women; office space for the chief and a large room which can be used for sleeping quarters when the day comes that Vacaville has paid firemen on 24 hours a day."

The amenities may not seem like much on the eve of the millennium, but small-town firehouses in the mid-1950s seldom had such amenities as an automatic dishwasher or women's restroom.

The station's big, automatic equipment room doors were another bragging point for local firefighters:

"One of the features of the new building is the electrically controlled door system which raises and lowers the six huge doors in the front of the building in one operation, or they may be electrically operated individually."

aCentral heating, a self-contained fuel supply and a big back yard with room for a barbecue were also part of Vacaville's first fire station.



The city's new firehouse (above) was built in the late 1950s by mostly volunteer help. Warren Hughes and Howard Wood Sr. (right), the first and second paid fire chiefs for the city, talk during the department's 100th anniversary in 1995.



Reporter file photos

"One of the features of the new building is the electrically controlled door system which raises and lowers the six huge doors in the front of the building in one operation, or they may be electrically operated individually."

The Reporter  
March 28, 1958

## City's first paid chief is named

By Brian Hamlin  
Staff Writer

Vacaville took a big step into professional firefighting in 1956 when the City Council decided to hire the community's first paid, full-time fire chief, G. Warren Hughes.

Hughes, a native of Oakland who grew up in Suisun Valley, was a former Southern Pacific Railroad employee and had been a member of the small Vacaville department since 1941.

He was elected chief of the all-volunteer organization seven years later and became the 26-member department's first paid chief in July 1956.

According to The Reporter of July 27, 1956, the appointment was made "as an emergency measure necessary for the immediate preservation of the public health and safety."

The city ordinance creating the new paid chief's position further noted that "the rapid growth of the city of Vacaville with the resulting increase of fire hazards and of fire has rendered inadequate the existing system of a volunteer, part-time fire chief."

It called for the new chief to organize and direct the activities of the Fire Department, enforce fire codes and ordinances, coordinate firefighting activities and formulate departmental rules as well as put together the agency's annual budget.

Hughes was instrumental in the opening of the city's first permanent fire station on Dobbins Street in 1958 and continued to serve there as fire chief until his retirement in 1971.

Hundreds of firefighters marched through downtown Vacaville to honor the former chief following his death in 1996 at the age of 89.

Chief G. Warren Hughes — Vacaville's first full-time, paid fire chief — the building initially was home to 25 volunteer personnel who were responsible for fire and rescue duties inside the city limits as well as in the adjoining rural Vacaville Fire Protection District.

The fire district is now headquartered on Vine Street.

Constructed under city contract by builders from throughout Solano, Napa and Sacramento counties, the project also received a helping hand from dozens of local volunteers and the firefighters themselves.

The headquarters cost a whopping \$46,000, with the Fire Department providing an additional \$6,000 from its budget for furnishings.

First proposed in 1954, construction on the new fire station began in November 1956, and the building was finished by the end of 1957.

Today, Vacaville boasts 71 personnel and four modern fire stations, with the department headquarters located at Station 1 on South Orchard Avenue.

## THREE DIE IN HOLOCAUST HERE

Trapped in Burning Home; Others Miraculously Escape

The worst holocaust in Vacaville history, not in property damage, but in loss of life, shortly after 2 o'clock Friday morning claimed the lives of three children of a raging fire at the William B. Callison home on the corner of Stevenson and Boyd streets. Lorna Underwood 11, Sheila Callison 3, and Jimmy Callison 5, were found by firemen in the charred bedroom of the large home, dead from heat and smoke. Two of the bodies were on the floor and one was in a bunk bed. The youngsters presumably were asleep and were trapped before they were able to awaken.

The flames had gained great headway before the alarm was sounded, and the old building was a torch, lighting up the sky for miles. From the Vacaville fire department entered as soon as they possibly could, when the children were missing, and found the youngsters. Efforts to revive two of the youngsters failed. Respiration was given up when it was found that they had died from the intense heat.

The confusion that existed during the fire was such that there were 11 or 12 people sleeping in the house at the time of the fire. These included William Callison, his three children who perished, Leisa Callison 2, Larry Underwood 13, Laura Underwood 9, and Lorraine Underwood 7. Mr. Underwood lost his life in an accident in Oregon about five years ago, and Mrs. Underwood married Callison about four years ago. Also in the house at the time was Alberta Burns, 31, of Delhart, Texas, a sister-in-law to Callison, who had been staying at the Callison home for the past month.

## Vacaville



## EXTRA

AN INDEPENDENT PROGRESSIVE

THE YACAVILLE REPORTER, YACAVILLE, CALIFORNIA, FRIDAY, SEPT. 19, '58

ESTABLISHED 1923

Charles Booth Named to Fill Vacancy on Planning Commission

The request of Charles B. Booth to serve as the vacant member of the Vacaville Planning Commission was granted by the city council on Friday night. Booth, who has been a member of the commission since 1954, was named to replace the late Mr. Booth, who died last week.

Booth, an employee of the city, was named to the commission by the city council on Friday night.

REPORT SHOWS CITY'S FINANCIAL CONDITION "SOUND"

The financial condition of the city of Vacaville was found to be "sound" by the city auditor, Mr. G. W. Hughes, in his report to the city council on Friday night.

The report shows that the city's financial condition is sound and that the city is in a position to meet its obligations.

Lucky Munch Saves Vacaville Theatre

Vacaville Theatre Manager Eric Winter's "lunch" that he should return and check the theatre before going home, is credited with saving the huge building from destruction shortly after 4 o'clock Friday morning, only a short time after the disastrous fire which claimed three lives at the Callison residence.

Smelling smoke, Winter notified the Vacaville Fire Department, whose members were still gathering up hose and putting the engines away from the Callison home. After considerable investigation, the fire was found burning beneath the floor of the building.



The old Vacaville High School gym burned on Aug. 5, 1953, in what is now Andrews Park.

Reporter file photo

## Blaze razes old high school gym

Vacaville's worst fire since the \$250,000 destruction of the Diamond Match Company plant on March 19, 1950, early Wednesday afternoon wrought complete ruin to the old high school brick building. As school buildings go, it was not considered old, for it had served school purposes for 22 years and as civic offices for the past year.

Within an hour after the alarm was turned in at 1:45 p.m., a blazing inferno had charred the bowels of the gymnasium, leaving the bare brick walls to surround the smoldering ruins.

Little, if any, of the building may be salvaged. The flames were under control by scores of firemen and many pieces of equipment before they could lick into the two-story east wing. However, damage to reinforcements and smoke and water appeared to have destroyed any further use of that remaining wing.

The building was covered by \$30,000 insurance, which when collected, will undoubtedly apply to the bonded indebtedness of the school district.

According to insurance records, a 1951 report showed the brick building had an estimated replacement value of \$167,493 and an insurance value of

\$116,547. The estimated replacement value of all buildings on the site (excluding real estate) was \$311,599, and the insurance value was \$189,657.

Origin of the fire remains a mystery. It had gained great headway when Num Fong, City Recreation Department director, turned in the alarm. He reported he was on the adjoining baseball field while youngsters were at play when he was attracted by smoke reaching out of the roof at the north end of the gymnasium. There was no indication the fire had started in the basement furnace at that end, which was not in use.

The entire gymnasium of lumber, except for the brick walls and steel trusses, was engulfed in flames in a matter of minutes and no attempt was made to quench the fire there. Firefighters concentrated on preventing the fire from reaching the east wing and the old frame building toward which flames were licking eagerly. A southwest breeze narrowly missed starting the flames on the latter building which is now permanently abandoned after having served the high school district for more than half a century.

The Reporter  
Aug. 7, 1953

## Three children killed in fire

The worst holocaust in Vacaville history, not in property damage, but in loss of life, shortly after 2 o'clock Friday morning claimed the lives of three youngsters at a raging fire at the William B. Callison home on the corner of Stevenson and Boyd streets. Lorna Underwood 11, Sheila Callison 3, and Jimmy Callison 5, were found by firemen in the charred bedroom of the large home, dead from heat and smoke. Two of the bodies were on the floor and one was in a bunk bed. The youngsters presumably were all asleep and were trapped before they were able to awaken.

The flames had gained great headway before the alarm was sounded, and the old building burned like a torch, lighting up the sky for miles. Firemen from the Vacaville fire department entered the bedroom as soon as they

possibly could, when told that the children were missing, and found the three youngsters. Efforts to revive two of the youngsters by artificial respiration were given up when it was found that they had died from the intense heat.

In the confusion that existed during the fire it was learned that there were 11 or 12 people sleeping in the house at the time of the fire. These included William Callison, his three children who perished, Leisa Callison 2, Larry Underwood 13, Laura Underwood 9, and Lorraine Underwood 7. Mr. Underwood lost his life in an accident in Oregon about five years ago, and Mrs. Underwood married Callison about four years ago. Also in the house at the time was Alberta Burns, 31, of Delhart, Texas, a sister-in-law to Callison, who had been staying at the Callison home for the past month.

Two new arrivals at the home only a few hours earlier were Clayton Burns, 14, and Polly Warren, 14, both of Texas.

In relating his story to the Reporter Clayton Burns said he first noticed the fire "burning in the front part of the house," which could have meant the front porch or a front room. The bedrooms were all in the east portion of the residence, and had the youngsters been awakened in time they could have easily jumped from the bedroom windows. Some of the children were sleeping on a back porch. Clayton also told the Reporter: "Don't use Polly Warren's name in the paper," implying that her whereabouts were to be kept secret. She had come with Clayton to the Callison home only a few hours earlier from Texas.

Extra!  
The Reporter  
Sept. 19, 1958



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**7:30 AM TO 5:30 PM, M-F**  
**Saturdays by Appointment**





## Carol Watkins succumbs just as benefit begins

The "Carol Watkins Fund, c/o Lions Club, Vacaville," was initiated Wednesday before the eyes of thousands of viewers, even as the four-year-old leukemia victim was desperately clinging to life at the University of California Hospital in San Francisco.

The television audiences that dialed to Les Malloy's Show on KGO-TV Wednesday afternoon saw and heard Bud Wykoff and Harry Talbot, Jr., make an appeal for funds needed to provide the necessary medical care for the child. The two men had earlier in the week been invited in a letter to the Lions Club to appear on the program. When they noted that the local Community Chest and Lions Club had pledged financial support, Les Malloy pledged the appeal would continue with another telecast if necessary.

Thus, northern California newspapers and television have through publicity given a heart-warming approach to the desperate financial need of the child's family. Just so, thousands will be watching her progress. But

because of the nature of her illness, it may be several weeks before her chances of survival can be determined. Yesterday her condition remained unchanged from the previous week and a question developed whether her affliction was really leukemia, so rare and dreadful is the disease. Nor was it learned whether she would be transferred to the Laguna Honda Hospital in San Francisco.

Mail responses to earlier appeals were received by the child's parents and by the Lions Club this week. Several contained donations and it was interesting to note the suggestions for cure contained in others.

Hospital expenses guaranteed by the Vacaville Community Chest were exhausted yesterday. It is hoped the television and newspaper appeals will add to the Lions Club's efforts to obtain necessary funds to continue the much needed hospitalization.

Carol Watkins died today.

The Reporter  
Jan. 11, 1952

## Boy improves slightly

Four-year-old Glenn Taylor was reported somewhat improved yesterday at the University of California Hospital in San Francisco, following another major operation. He had undergone surgery shortly before Christmas for the removal of a cancer-infested kidney and a section of intestine.

It was indicated that if the present rate of progress continues, the child will be allowed to return to the home of his par-

ents, Mr. and Mrs. Harold V. Taylor, in Vacaville in a week or two. Although he has been pronounced out of danger now, the effect of the operations will not probably be known for some time.

While at the hospital, Mrs. Taylor visited with Mrs. Al Watkins to comfort the Watkins' daughter, Carol, who is critically ill there with leukemia.

The Reporter  
Jan. 11, 1952

## School board rejects polio immunization

In a 3-2 vote after a spirited discussion, the board of trustees of the Vaca Valley elementary school district in regular session Monday night shied away from the district's participation in a proposed polio immunization program for students.

The board's action, in effect, shut the door on a recommendation of school nurses to make polio shots available to all elementary school children at \$1 per shot.

If the action stands pupils will have to go to their own physicians if their parents wish

### Nurse recommendation overlooked

them to inoculated with the polio vaccine.

The nurses' recommendation was made to District Superintendent Robert B. Pokorny, who then asked the board, without making a recommendation, to consider the proposal as a matter of policy.

Under the proposal, pupils who had not received all of their shots previously could receive them at their school at the rate of \$1 each for the first, second or third shots, or \$3 for the series.

Those who had not received the full series could also get the remainder at \$1 each.

The shots would be administered by a physician by appointment on a particular date. The school district would pay 75 cents for the vaccine for a single shot. The balance would be used to help defray costs of the services of a physician. It was believed that the program cost would be almost negligible to the district.

Free or near-free polio

immunization programs are no longer available in Vacaville.

The recommendation of the nurses was made after they showed preference for the polio program over the free diphtheria-tetanus program.

Board members voting for the polio immunization program were Ellis Savides and Lloyd Sponsler. Mrs. James Kimbell broke a 2-2 vote after Mrs. Robert H. Power and Douglas Thompson had voted against it.

The Reporter  
Nov. 6, 1959



## SCHOOL IS NOW OPEN

This means that MORE THAN EVER we must drive carefully. Careful driving requires good brakes.

LET US CHECK YOUR BRAKES TODAY

**Good Deal Garage**

654 Main St.

Dial 2040

## SCHOOL'S OPEN

This advertisement in The Reporter on Sept. 14, 1951, for the Good Deal Garage, reminds motorists to get their brakes checked "School is now open." And that "means that MORE THAN EVER we must drive carefully."

## A PART OF HISTORY



**Vaca Hills Chapel**  
FUNERAL DIRECTORS  
caring since 1967

*"The Choice and Trust will be Yours  
The Responsibility is Ours."*

Pre-Need Services • Cremation Services  
(707) 446-3233  
524 Elmira Road • Vacaville

## Stylish Women's Fashions

We offer personal, courteous service with a smile and prices that will put a smile on your face.

.....

The New Look of Christian Dior could still be seen in fashion throughout the fifties for shirtwaists or skirt and blouse, both with full skirts and slim-fitting bodices.



**UPTOWN FASHIONS**

431 Main St., Downtown Vacaville • 707/452-1114  
Tues. - Fri., 10-6 • Sat., 10-5 • Evenings by appointment

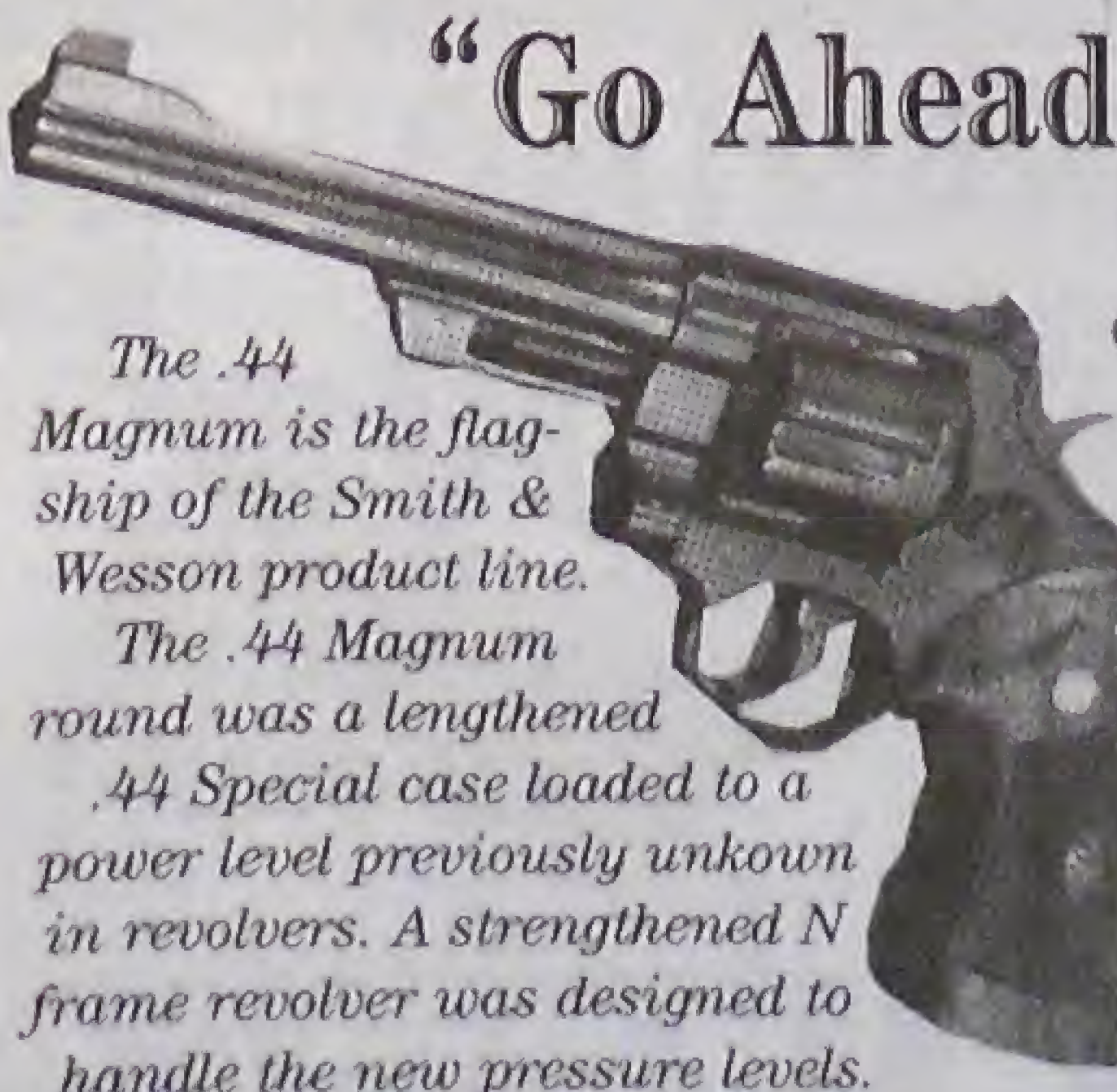

## "Go Ahead, Make My Day"

The most powerful handgun ever made was an instant hit after being used by Clint Eastwood in "Dirty Harry"

The .44 Magnum is the flagship of the Smith & Wesson product line.

The .44 Magnum round was a lengthened .44 Special case loaded to a power level previously unknown in revolvers. A strengthened N frame revolver was designed to handle the new pressure levels.

Smith & Wesson has continually improved the design and current production guns include recent engineering changes that have significantly enhanced the durability of the gun

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Hours: Tues., 12-7, Wed.-Fri., 10-6, Sat., 9-5

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*Gifts in good taste*

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• Custom Gift Baskets For Any Occasion




**Vaca Valley Mercantile**

354 Merchant St. 446-6333



## Summer theater to begin soon

The second production of the Vacaville Summer Theatre will be placed before the public on the evenings of August 22, 23, and 24, with curtain time at 8:30. Taking place in the Community Theatre annex, a series of the one-act plays will be presented, each under a different director. The "pieces de resistance" for the evening will be highlights from "Showboat."

"Showboat" is being given full treatment, and will be under the musical direction of Lawrence Record, and will be staged by Charles Lovell. Elsa Sevilla will be the accompanist. Soloists, singing the well-known and well-loved hit songs from "Showboat" will be Dennis Dicks, Barbara Linfesty, William Divine, Doris Goupp, Jean McGraw, Anne Mae Anast, Marianna Pokorny and Mabel Klotz. The chorus will consist of the above plus Kenneth Barron, Jean Sabean, Adrian Hendrix, Ellen Marks, Roger Dicks and Marcia Boyd. Dance routines are under the direction of Stanley Ware.

The Reporter  
Aug. 17, 1956

## Copter takes man to Nut Tree lunch

When a helicopter landed in the green field adjacent to the Nut Tree on Wednesday, there was every possibility that it may have been an emergency landing, but when the pilot walked into the dining room he said he had merely dropped in for lunch.

The Reporter  
May 12, 1950

## Theater near you ...

# VACAVILLE THEATRE

Positively Ends Saturday



"School's Out" Matinee Saturday

Doors Open at 1:00 P. M.

3 - Big Features - 3

★ NO. 1—"Hiawatha" IN COLOR

★ NO. 2—"Beachhead" IN COLOR

NO. 3 "Creature From Black Lagoon"

NOTE TO PARENTS: Schedule is arranged so that Junior can see "Hiawatha" and "Beachhead" without seeing "Creature" if you care to have the small fry leave during the intermission.

This ad for the Vacaville Theatre in the June 25, 1954, Reporter lists some of the latest offerings at the movie house, including "School's Out" Matinee Saturday.

## Widow Pleasants' services burial held in Winters

Funeral services for Mrs. Mary H. Pleasants, 86, widow of the late Ansel P. Pleasants, after whose family Pleasants Valley was named, were held last Saturday in St. Anthony's Catholic church in Winters. She died early last Thursday morning at Sutter Hospital in Sacramento after a lengthy illness. Interment was at the Winters cemetery.

For many years before she became ill several months ago, Mrs. Pleasants was most active. She wrote numerous articles for this newspaper describing the early days in Pleasants Valley of which she was a prominent part. Her late husband, who preceded her in death about ten years ago, was the son of W.J. Pleasants who has been credited with being the first commercial fruit grower in California. He settled in the valley which now bears his name less than a year after the Vacas and Penas settled in Vaca Valley in 1842. His family

"She wrote numerous articles for this newspaper describing the early days in Pleasants Valley"

has lived on the same ranch since he built the first home in the Valley.

A native of Iowa, Mrs. Pleasants moved to San Francisco as a child. As a young woman she moved to the Pleasants district to teach school and there married the younger Pleasants. In failing health since November of last year, she had been staying with her daughter, Mrs. Clarence Gilmore, in Sacramento, until death claimed her.

In addition to Mrs. Gilmore, she is survived by another daughter, Mrs. Emil Stern of Oakland; a sister, Mrs. F.W. Willis of Woodland, and three granddaughters.

The Reporter  
Feb. 16, 1951

## Prominent local rancher, Caesar Bradanini, dies

Funeral services for Caesar Bradanini, 86, retired, prominent Vacaville rancher, who died Sunday at the Woodland Clinic after confinement there for 18 days, were held Wednesday with High Mass being said at the Vacaville St. Mary's Church. Rosary was recited Tuesday evening at the McCune Chapel. Father Michael Garvey officiated at the services. Interment was at the Vacaville-Elmira cemetery.

A native of Italy, Bradanini had been a resident of California for 60 years. He was a prominent orchardist in the English Hills section for many years.

He is survived by his widow, Mrs. Elizabeth Bradanini; six sons, Enrico, Rudolph, John and Joe, all of Vacaville, Tim of Dixon and Caesar Bradanini of Richmond, and two brothers, Jim Bradanini of Auburn and Pio Bradanini of Connecticut.

Acting as pallbearers were John Yolo, Achilles Panizza, Victor Corbella, Louie Mariani, Caesar Bradanini and Mike Libonati.

Also surviving are seven grandchildren: Michael, Kathleen, Raymond, Robert, Shirley, James and Lily.

The Reporter  
Dec. 8, 1950

# Three generations of our family use COIT to clean our carpets, draperies and sofas.

For over 45 years, COIT's advanced equipment and fully trained, certified technicians have provided the most effective cleaning available to assure you the best results possible; *and we guarantee it!*



Michelle Steiner

My mom and granny suggested that I have COIT clean my two white sofas. It saved me from throwing them out and buying new ones. They're so clean they're like new.



Michelle Steiner with her mother Jane & Granny Angeline. Satisfied COIT customers since 1960.

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**FREE estimate!**



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1950-1959

THE PAST CENTURY

## Movies right in own homes

Are you tired of going to the movies? Do gangsters with hearts of gold, heroines beset by complexes, cowboys who strum guitars, and dancehall queens who finally marry the U.S. Marshal, bore you?

Cheer up. Soon you can bring the movies right into your home!

According to television experts, inside of a year or two it will be possible to call your telephone operator and ask that Hollywood's latest opus be piped direct to your own living room, so close you'll almost be able to scent Channel number five. The charge for this miracle — only a dollar — will appear the end of the month on your telephone bill.

It won't be exactly like the movies, of course. You won't be able to stand in line at the box office, jump up and down, hat in hand, whenever someone wants to get by, or surreptitiously watch the hand-holding couple sitting next to you when your interest lags in the picture.

And what about popcorn? No movie is complete without it. Unless the telephone company devises a way to shoot a handful of the crunchy stuff through the telephone receiver, we predict that tele-movies will achieve only indifferent success.

The Reporter  
Jan. 13, 1950

The Pacific Gas & Electric ad of Sept. 20, 1957, urges parents to buy a new TV so the kids can have one of their own. It also shows an early TV-viewer habits poll.

## TV'S MORE FUN ... when there's a second one



With so much good entertainment in sight this Fall, a second set will mean more fun for everyone in the family. The kids can have their "horse operas" (behind closed doors) ... and Mom and Dad can watch their favorite program, too. Low prices make this the time to buy that second TV set ... and turn your old model over to the kids.

Use the chart to take a poll of your family's TV tastes (if you can't get together, a second set is the answer).

	FATHER	MOTHER	SON	DAUGHTER	GRANDFATHER	GRANDMOTHER	UNCLE	AUNT	NEPHEW	NIECE
1										
2										
3										
4										
5										
6										
7										
8										
9										
10										

Electricity is cheap in California!

**P-G-E**  
Pacific Gas and Electric Company

## Godfrey uses joke sent in by Vacaville resident

A short time ago, Mrs. L.E. Williams submitted a joke to Arthur Godfrey signed "Thelma Williams," which he read on his program.

In just a few days, Mrs. Williams received a letter from a listener of the program, Mrs. Irene North of Johnson City, New York, asking her if she was the granddaughter of Richard Reimnitz. Mrs. North explained that she had never known any of her relatives but did remember that many years ago, her uncle, Mr. Reimnitz of California, had visited at their home and mentioned his granddaughter, Thelma Williams, also of California. Mrs. North also wrote that she had a daughter, Mrs. Bill Alves,

living in Colma, California, who had been urging her to come west.

A friend of Mrs. Williams on making a trip to Colma, contacted Mrs. Alves, whereupon Mr. and Mrs. Alves were recent visitors at the Williams' home. After showing of "family albums" and a very congenial day, Mrs. Alves wrote her mother and convinced her she would thoroughly enjoy her new-found relatives. The result is that Mrs. North is moving to California in April of this year.

The Williams will meet in person, the relative who was found through a joke.

The Reporter  
Feb. 15, 1952

## Listeners can hear local KNBC radio broadcast

The radio broadcast originating at the Nut Tree this morning at 8:30 will go on the air over KNBC at 9:30 and radio listeners here will be able to tune in on the program to hear the voices of many local people. The broadcast, sponsored by the SDB Club of Vacaville, will feature Jane Lee and her Woman's Magazine of the Air, which has become a popular program for Pacific Coast listeners.

Although the breakfast and

program at the Nut Tree this forenoon will start at 8:30, the actual broadcast over the air lanes will not start until 9:30 and will last a half hour.

Tickets for the breakfast and broadcast have been on sale, and from advance sales a good sized audience will be present.

A Jan Lee broadcast was held here several years ago at the Annex, and drew a capacity crowd.

The Reporter  
June 16, 1950

## TV tower being erected

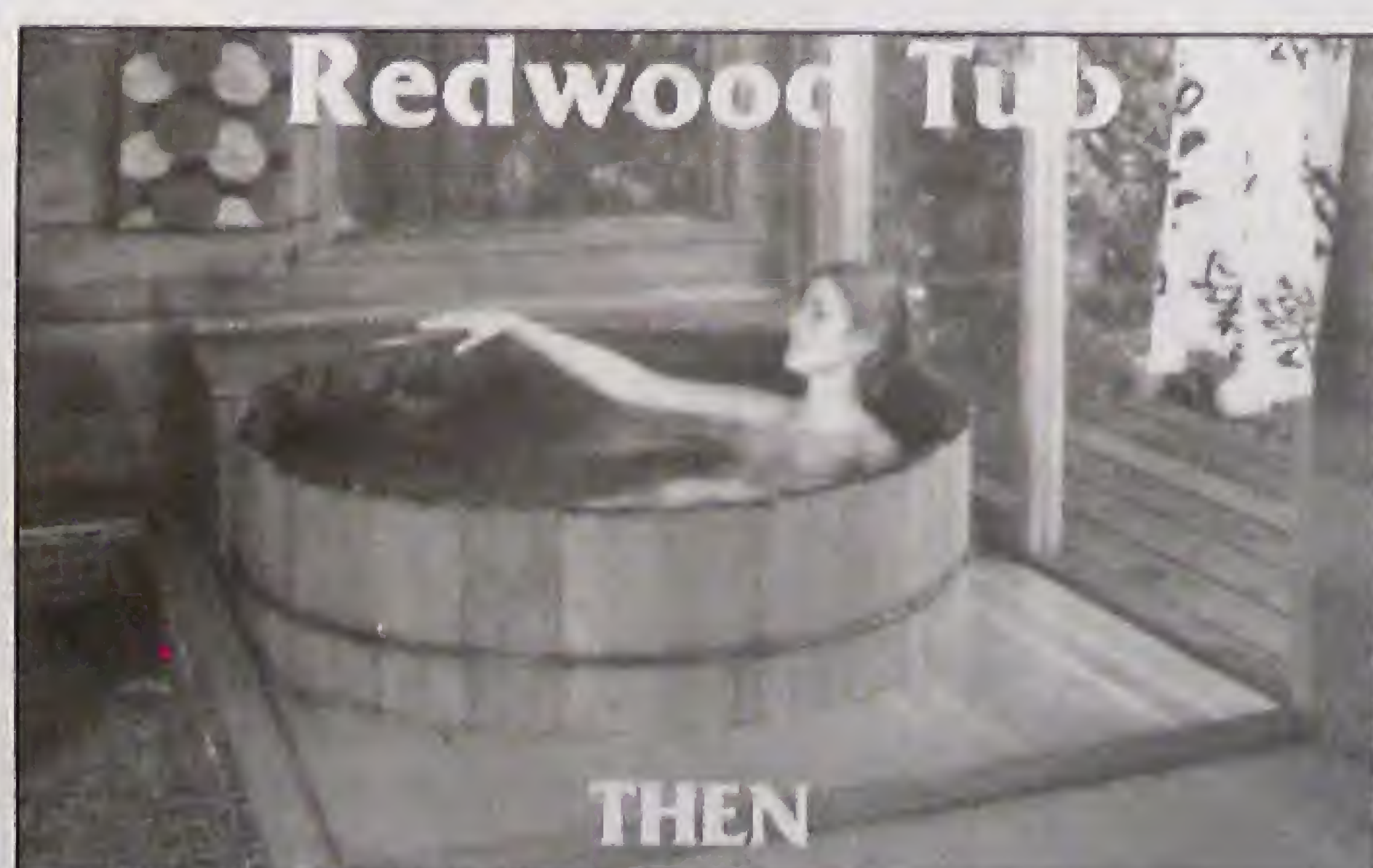
Engineers of the Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Company were working on a tower this week on the Rivera ranch south of Vacaville. As far as can be gathered the company will erect a micro-wave relay station, one of several to be built on

the west coast, designed to make television reception better between television centers on the coast. The land on which the company is building the tower was purchased from E.H. Uhl.

The Reporter  
April 21, 1950

# HOT TUBS

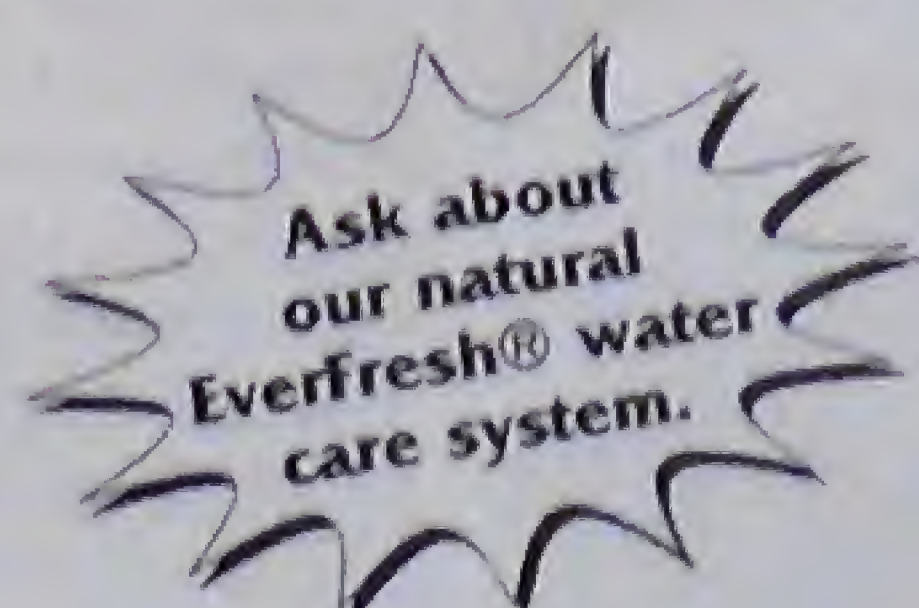
## A California Tradition at Untraditional Prices



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- 1st Annual Statewide Hot Spring® spa sale (now 'til September 6, 1999)
- Your own mini vacation spot has never been more convenient or easy to use.
- The only spa company to have a model awarded a "Best Buy" by Consumers Digest Magazine everytime they've rated spas.

Come in and experience the Ultimate Evolution of Relaxation...24 years in the making.



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(TJ Max Plaza)  
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(Market Place 99)  
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\*No purchase necessary. Visit participating dealers for more information and Official Rules and Regulations.



1950-1959

THE PAST CENTURY

# What's, COOKIN'

The following recipes appeared in The Reporter and came from local readers.

## Peach Cake

- 3 cups sifted flour
- 2/3 cup sugar
- 1 1/4 cup butter or margarine
- 5 egg yolks
- 8 peeled peaches
- 1/3 to 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 egg, beaten

Sift flour, add 2/3 cup sugar. Drop in butter and blend until mixture is crumbly. Add egg yolks and mix until dough forms a ball. Divide dough. Roll half of dough into a rectangle and place it on cookie sheet. Make a border out of strips of dough 1/2 inch wide.

Arrange peach halves on dough and sprinkle with 1/3 cup sugar. Arrange strips of dough over peaches and brush with the 1 beaten egg.

Bake for 10 minutes at 450 degrees. Reduce heat to 375 degrees and bake for 25 minutes. This is very rich, but is delicious.

Aug. 6, 1954

## Chicken, Artichoke, Mushroom Casserole

- 1 frying chicken (approximately 3 lbs.)
- 1 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/4 tsp. paprika
- 6 tblsp. butter or margarine
- 1/4 lb. mushrooms, sliced
- 1 can No. 303 artichoke hearts, drained
- 2 tblsp. flour
- 2/3 cup chicken broth
- 3 tblsp. sherry
- 1/4 tsp. dried or 1 tsp. fresh rosemary

Cut chicken into serving pieces, and sprinkle with salt, pepper and paprika.

Brown in 4 tblsp. of the butter, and remove to casserole. Add the remaining 2 tblsp. of

butter to the drippings and saute sliced mushrooms in this. Arrange artichoke hearts in between the chicken pieces.

Sprinkle flour over the mushrooms and stir in the chicken broth, sherry and rosemary. Cook for a few minutes, then pour over the chicken and artichokes.

Cover and bake in a moderately hot oven 375 degrees for 40 minutes, or until the chicken is tender.

The rich gravy is wonderful with any type of rice. Serves six.

Aug. 13, 1954

## Poor Man's Supper (or unexpected company dish)

- 1/2 lb. hamburger or more if you have it on hand
- 2 or 3 bay leaves
- 1 clove garlic or garlic salt
- 1 onion chopped
- 2 or 3 tblsp. bacon drippings or oleo
- 1 can mushrooms and juice or 1 can mushroom soup
- 1/2 bell pepper chopped (optional)
- 1 tsp. Worcestershire sauce or soya sauce
- 2 tblsp. flour (heaping)
- 1 cup milk and water to thin
- 1/4 cup wine to flavor

Cook and mash potatoes for four. While potatoes are cooking, place hamburger crumbled in small pieces, bay leaves, garlic, onion and bacon drippings in skillet and brown over medium heat. Then add mushrooms, bell pepper and Worcestershire sauce.

Make a paste with the flour and small amount of milk, adding rest of milk gradually. Pour into skillet with rest of ingredients, thinning with water when necessary. Cook until

potatoes are mashed and ready to serve. Serve on top of mashed potatoes like gravy. Kids love it.

Sept. 24, 1954

## Yogurt Cookies

- Sift together:
- 3 1/4 cups sifted flour
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 tsp. soda
- 1/2 tsp. salt

Put into large bowl of mixer:

- 1/2 cup shortening or butter (soft)
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 egg unbeaten
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 1 tsp. nutmeg

Beat for about 2 minutes and then add:

- 1 cup yogurt
- Add sifted flour mixture, beat on slow speed only until

well blended — about a minute. Roll out on lightly floured surface to 1/4 inch thick. Cut, sprinkle with sugar. Bake about 12 minutes in 425 degree oven. Makes about 3 dozen cookies.

Sept. 11, 1953

## Cabinet Pudding

- 2 cups hot milk
  - 1/2 cup bread crumbs
  - 2 eggs (beaten)
  - 2/3 cup sugar
  - 1/4 tsp. salt
  - 1/2 tsp. vanilla
  - little cinnamon
  - 1/2 cup chopped apple
  - 1/2 cup peaches (cut small)
  - 1/2 cup raisins
- Mix together in order as listed. Bake in buttered baking pan

in 350 degree oven for 1 hour.

Nov. 12, 1954

## Fried Rice

- 1 1/2 cups uncooked rice
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 2 tblsp. fat or Wesson oil
- 1 cup cubed Spam or pork (uncooked)
- 1/2 to 2/3 cup soy sauce (according to taste)

Steam or boil the rice with a little salt added until tender. Saute onions and Spam in the fat. Add rice and brown lightly, adding more fat if necessary to prevent sticking. Then add slowly the soy sauce stirring constantly. Serve at once with a fruit salad.

Sept. 11, 1953

## Frito Pie (Mexican Dish)

- 1 large package Fritos or corn chips
- 1 can or brick of chili
- 1 can tomato soup
- 1 large onion, cut fine
- 1 lb. cheese

Line deep baking dish with half of the Fritos or corn chips. Add half of the chili which has been heated. Add the onion.

Add the balance of the Fritos and chili and top this with the soup (not diluted) and the grated cheese. Bake 45 minutes at 325 degree oven.

Sept. 25, 1953

## EDITORIALS, THE REPORTER OCT. 2, 1953

### Creeping feminism

The International Federation of Women's Magistrates and Lawyers, meeting in Naples, Italy, has urged that worldwide action be taken to make it easier to collect alimony.

"Worldwide action" — a sobering thought. No fair-minded person will condone the culprit husband who ducks his financial responsibilities. That's a very wrong thing. But women are surely grasping

a lot of power in this world.

Only the other day it was reported from France that King Peter, formerly of Yugoslavia, will be sued for non-support by Queen Alexandra. If she wins, and those women magistrates have their "worldwide" way, not even a King will have a place to hide. For then Alexandra can pursue and collar poor Peter even if he joins the Foreign Legion.

### To guard your liberties

The price of liberty, it is said, is eternal vigilance. Freedom unguarded is freedom imperiled. Here in America, a strong, free press keeps constant watch over our freedoms ... sounding the alarm against malefactors ... slashing at evil with a keen sword of enlightenment. By providing you with information, freely, objectively and completely, the American press arms you with the most vital weapon for keeping America free ... and that

weapon is enlightenment.

Now, during this annual observance of National Newspaper Week, let's all give thanks for the strength we share through the freedom of the press ... thanks for the enlightenment that helps us chart and steer a wise course for the land. Ignorance is enslavement. Knowledge is power. For the fact that every American possesses the fullest possible press ... the freest on earth.

### Fire prevention week

With the approach of Fire Prevention Week beginning October 4, we are impressed by the fact that safety from fire is a matter of common sense more than anything else.

Of course, there are instances when lack of knowledge of what can cause a blaze results in a fire, but more often it's nothing but carelessness and the failure to exercise reasonable judgment.

People are told innumerable times never to smoke in bed. But they do it. And many of them pay with their lives. People are told never to abandon a camp fire without first dousing it thoroughly with water. But they walk away leaving glowing embers that cause many a forest fire, plus losses in timber, wealth and lives. People are told never to leave valuable documents in the home but rather put them in safe deposit. But thousands of instances of certificates, deeds, bonds and even life's savings being destroyed by fire in the home add to the sad record every year.

People are told never to leave matches where young children can reach them. But thousands of children suffer annually because this isn't done. People are told never to leave young children alone in the house, especially if they're locked in. Yet, here again, tragedy after tragedy of this kind shows that the warnings are not heeded.

Surely it is worth a little effort to prevent fire from striking YOUR HOME. Surely it is worth the simple precautions that will prevent a blaze from starting. If YOU will do your part in fire prevention in the coming year the sad statistics of loss can be reduced and — more important — you will be not part of them.

In Vacaville, the volunteer fire department, under the leadership of its chief, Warren Hughes, is consistently endeavoring to provide better fire protection to the community. The members give of their time with but little remuneration. Can they depend on you to do your share in keeping fires to a minimum?



I promise to love, honor  
and obey and have all  
our clothes cleaned by

## VACAVILLE CLEANERS

348 Merchant St.

Dial HI 8-6318

Smart is the wife who knows the importance of keeping the family's clothes in tip-top shape always. We guarantee the best cleaning job possible each time. So be smart and make us your regular dry cleaners. Prompt pick-up and delivery.

This ad in The Reporter on Oct. 25, 1957, showed the importance of clean laundry. Or at least in the mind of a new bride.

## In defense of all men everywhere

It's out, now. Nine out of ten American husbands are kitchen slaves! They're more than tied to their wives' apron strings. They don the aprons themselves, covering the executive-type business suits they wore so independently during the day, as they march to their chores at the sink and the washing machine.

No other interpretation seems applicable to a survey, reported this week by the New York Journal of Commerce, revealing that nine husbands in every ten help their spouses with the housework.

And yet, on second thought, who provided all the household aids that have push-buttoned drudgery right out of the U.S. home? Why men did that — inventing and perfecting everything from the vacuum cleaner to the electric dishwasher! And why did they do that? Plainly because they are gallant souls, inspired to lighten the little woman's burdens!

And why are men now operating all those things? Simple again. U.S. males are gadget minded. They always spend half of Christmas Day playing with Junior's mechanical toys before he can get a hand on them. Just boys at heart, they can't resist the mechanical marvels their gallantry and sympathy created.

As for the 10 per cent who don't help their wives around the house, they're probably either unchivalrous cads or unimaginative clods (though mightily brave, at that!)

Editorial, The Reporter  
Sept. 12, 1952



1950-1959

THE PAST CENTURY

# NIXON, DOUGLAS MAKE CAMPAIGN SWINGS

## Woman to fly in for speech

Congresswoman Helen Gahagan Douglas, currently campaigning for U.S. Senator from California, will make a helicopter landing on the Vacaville high school field on Monday, May 22, at 3 p.m. for her first and only scheduled talk to voters in this area.

Mrs. Douglas is seeking the seat in the Senate to be vacated by Senator Sheridan Downey who announced several months ago that he would not seek re-election. Seeking the Democratic and Republican nominations, she will be opposed at the June 6th primary election by Congressman Richard Nixon and Manchester Boddy, newspaper publishers, who are the leading candidates trying for both nominations.

One of California's leading Democrats, she was National Democratic Committeewoman from 1940 to 1944. In 1944 she was elected a member of Congress and successfully succeeded herself in 1946 and 1948. She is a member of the House Armed Services Committee.

Her act of championing the cause of the nation's housewives was highly publicized recently when she appeared on the House floor armed with a basketful of groceries and delivered a cost-of-living speech.

The Reporter  
May 19, 1950



Carl Albert Center Congressional Archives, University of Oklahoma  
Congresswoman Helen Gahagan Douglas, a candidate for Senate, emerges from a voting booth after casting her vote in 1950.



In one of the toughest, most bitter campaigns in memory, Richard M. Nixon eventually won the Senate race by 700,000 votes.

## Nixon making stop in Vaca

Congressman Richard Nixon, candidate for U.S. Senator, will make a street address tomorrow (Saturday) in Vacaville at the corner of Dobbins and Main streets at 11:30 a.m., it was announced by his field manager, Joseph F. Holt, who made arrangements for the meeting when he visited here recently.

Following his street corner address he will be the speaker at a luncheon at the Nut Tree at 12:15 p.m. The meeting has been arranged by his supporters. Tickets for the luncheon may be obtained at the Reporter office.

Nixon represents the 12th California District in the House of Representatives and is now seeking the seat held by Senator Sheridan Downey, who previously announced he will not be a candidate for re-election. Nixon is a Republican.

Prior to his appearance in Vacaville Saturday morning, Nixon will be honored at an 8 o'clock breakfast in Woodland. Walter Buckingham, formerly of Vacaville, is Nixon's campaign manager in the Woodland area and will have charge of breakfast reservations.

The Reporter  
May 12, 1950

## Douglas descends into Vacaville

Support of the Brannan Plan and opposition to "discriminatory freight rates" for California farmers was pledged by Congresswoman Helen Gahagan Douglas in a brief talk Monday when she appeared in Vacaville on a campaign tour of northern California by helicopter as a candidate for U.S. Senator from California.

Seconds after her helicopter was first sighted she descended from it onto the local high school field as it made its way from Benicia favored by a brisk south wind. Although arriving a half hour behind schedule, her departure was as spectacular as her arrival. Her helicopter made a pinpoint landing and departed in reverse fashion, in the opposite direction. Flying with her were her pilot and Don Stuess, campaign tour chairman for northern California.

She was welcomed with a bouquet of roses presented her by Miss Georgia Gregg, Vacaville High school senior student.

The landing of a helicopter for the first time within the city caused no less a sensation than Mrs. Douglas' charm and personality, referred to by Mayor Albert Porter who welcomed her in his official capacity. Following her introduction by

Robert L. Kindig, central Democratic committeeman from Solano county, Mrs. Douglas plunged into a 15-minute talk on current legislation in Washington, striking only briefly on most points.

A mixed audience of adults and students from the high school and Ulatis elementary school were excused from the last period classes at 3 p.m. to greet Mrs. Douglas, heard her plead for Americans to exercise their inalienable right as citizens to vote on election day. She said that issues, rather than personalities, should be judged in selecting public officials, and she herself felt qualified for the high office she seeks by reason of her study of the nation's needs even before she was elected to Congress for three terms.

The office of United States Senator, she declared, is next to president and vice president, the highest selective office in the nation and is becoming increasingly more important in light of changing domestic and world affairs.

She declared she is the only candidate who considers that the home is the most important issue as the foundation of a community. "With Melvin, our two children and security," she said she has no special interests to serve. Melvin is her

actor husband.

In rapid-fire order she told of her work in the House Military Affairs Committee, development of resources and full support for the Central Valleys project, the need for improvement of public schools and public health, and the need for strengthening democracy.

Once a Republican, she concluded, "I became a Democrat because the Republicans had nothing to offer." She is opposed in the race for the seat of retiring Senator Sheridan Downey by Congressman Richard Nixon, who visited Vacaville two weeks ago, and by Manchester Boddy, Los Angeles newspaper publisher.

In response to a question on local reclamation projects, she reiterated her stand for the Central Valleys project, including local development, and for the 160-acre limitations.

Almost as fast as she had come, Mrs. Douglas disappeared into the air. A half hour later she was speaking to a crowd at a downtown street in Woodland, and in Sacramento that evening. Further helicopter landings were scheduled for Roseville, Yuba City, Oroville, Chico, Corning, Red Bluff and Redding, all on the following day.

The Reporter  
May 26, 1950

## Nixon stumps in Vaca Valley

Sharply attacking the Brannan Farm aid program as "impossible," Congressman Richard M. Nixon last Saturday brought his campaign for the United States Senate directly to the people of Vacaville.

Speaking first on a Vacaville street corner, the representative later gave an address to a meeting of Nixon boosters headed by Wayne Woodard, Nixon's Solano county campaign chairman. His message was keyed particularly to the interest of residents of Vacaville and nearby communities.

"Let's understand clearly at the outset where I stand on this Brannan Plan issue," Nixon told his audience. "I'm against it. The voters' choice is clear. My opponents favor it; I don't. I cannot favor any program that automatically would raise the cost of every American family's grocery bill \$200 a year."

"I think there is a better way."

Nixon was here in fulfillment of his campaign pledge to take important issues directly to the people in all of California's 58 counties. He came here from Dixon and Woodland and went later to Fairfield, Suisun and Napa.

The candidate charged that the Brannan bill is not new but was copied "lock, stock and barrel" from the British farm program which did not and is not

now proving satisfactory in Great Britain.

"It would impose impossible controls on the farmer," Nixon asserted, "and the farmer would not only be told what to plant but how much he could plant and what it could be sold for — with jail terms imposed for violations. We would need an army of government snoopers to check up on possible violators."

Nixon charged that the Brannan plan, together with other spending features of the Truman so-called program, would, within five years, add 20 million dollars annually to a budget already larger than ever before in the nation's history.

"I welcome this issue because I don't believe you can fool the people by promising that farmers will be paid higher prices for their produce, that consumers will pay less, and that there is no one in between to pay the bill. The truth is that the bill must be paid in taxes and every citizen in the land would have to pay it."

Nixon said both the farmers and consumers want a program that decreases controls on the farmer and lowers cost to the consumer, and he offered a six-point alternative to the Brannan proposal.

At the luncheon at the Nut Tree, which was attended by

over 80 interested men and women, Nixon greeted everyone present with a handshake, and before going into the speech in which he criticized President Truman's stand on the Taft-Hartley labor law, the Brannan plan and other socialistic legislation he paid tribute to the interest taken in the nation's affairs by Mrs. Hester A. Harbison, 92, who was in attendance at the meeting. He also paid high tribute to Congressman Leroy Johnson of this district for his services in Washington, and had words of praise for Mrs. Johnson, who also was in attendance at Saturday's luncheon, coming here from Sacramento with Mrs. Louise Valle, a former Vacaville resident. Mrs. Johnson and Mrs. Valle attended the Saturday Club meeting later that afternoon.

The Nut Tree came in for considerable praise by the Congressman. He said this was his first visit to the place, and that he had been told of it by his friend, Fulton Lewis, Jr., in Washington.

Mrs. Nixon, a charming young woman, is accompanying her husband on the campaign tour. During the dinner she passed out plastic thimbles on which was printed the message "Nixon for Senator."

The Reporter  
May 19, 1950



## Public service

Al Porter, Vacaville mayor from 1950 to 1958 and a councilman for 12 years, (at right) throws out the first ball at a baseball game in May 1957. With him that day were Fire Chief Warren Hughes (left), the Rev. Henry McFadden (third from right, back), Bert Hughes (second from right, back) and City Manager Robert Meyers (right, back). Porter (above) is shown later in life.



Reporter file photos

## Teen vandals spur library to shut down

Vandalism by teen-agers, which has disturbed the board of trustees of the Vacaville public library and caused considerable damage and looting at the library, has forced the closing of the library at night for at least a week, according to Librarian Esther Eldredge.

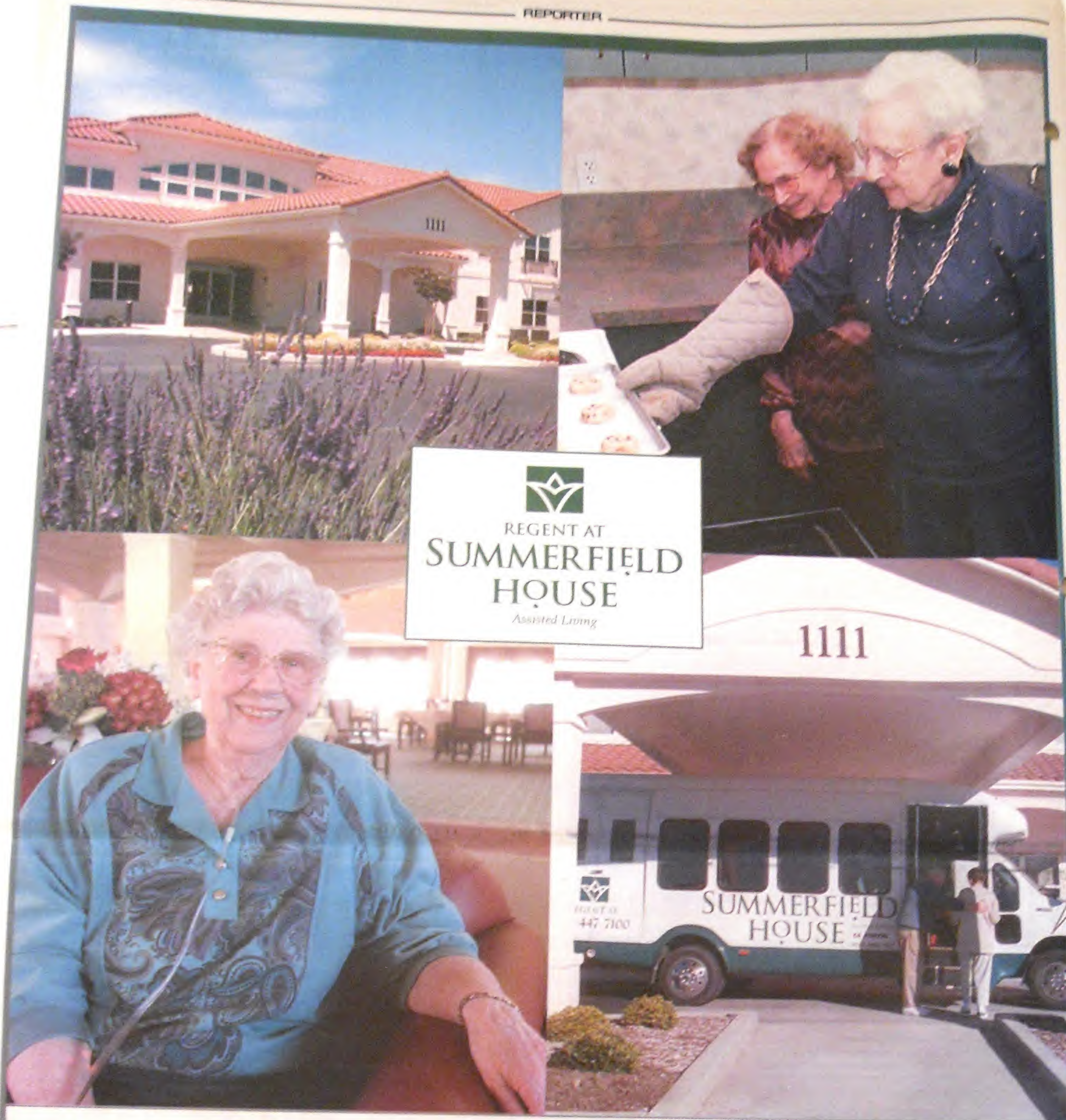
Mrs. Eldredge reveals that articles have been stolen from the library and valuable pictures have been marred by the teen-agers.

Mrs. Eldredge states that the afternoon hours of the library will be from 2 to 6 until a decision is made on the night problem.

She said some of the teen-agers go to the library at night to read or study, but others have been going there just to create havoc. The pictures which have been marred were collected and reproduced at a cost of \$1,000 by the Vacaville Historical Committee. It has been necessary to remove them from the main library quarters to more remote quarters in the library basement.

The Reporter  
Dec. 4, 1950





  
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## Vaca man disappears on pilgrimage to Mecca

When Ahmed Khan left last September on a trip that was to be the fulfillment of his dreams — the annual pilgrimage to Mecca, the once in a lifetime goal of Moslem pilgrims — there were no crowds to see him off, but hundreds of Vacaville residents who had made his acquaintance during his 42-year stay here hoped his would be a pleasant journey.

Ahmed's story, of his departure from Vacaville on his cherished mission, was told by the Reporter in its issue of September 15, 1950. It told of a year's preparation for the trip that almost ended in heartbreak even before it started. When his leave papers were finally straightened out, only a few hours before his scheduled departure, he gave a sigh of relief and with a smile turned his thoughts toward his long air travel and his destination, Saudi Arabia.

But since the article was published, it seems something has gone wrong. He is four months overdue and there is no record he ever reached his destination. Northern California newspapers this week were given wide publicity to the search being conducted for him by immigration officials in three countries, two railroads, an airlines agency and a network of police.

On the eve of Ahmed's departure last September, Attorney Walter J. Weir, told of the wrangle of international red tape.

The request for passports and visas were first made almost a year before. He had no difficulty in getting his travel connections, but the visa was another thing.

Until the morning of the day he was to take a train to New York, and later a plane to Saudia Arabia, in time for the annual pilgrimage, Ahmed had not received his clearance from immigration departments. He had been told the visa was on its way, but if it did not get through the mail on time the whole thing would have to be called off.

Ahmed almost wept with joy when that morning's mail brought him the necessary papers. When he withdrew about \$3,000 from his postal savings for his travel expenses, he believed the way was cleared for the realization of a 42-year ambition. He carried his money in cash. ...

That Ahmed might never have reached the birthplace of Mohammed is a revolting thought. The native of Pakistan was a British subject when he made his way through China, Canada and to Vaca Valley agriculture in 1907.

His hair turned white with his years (65) while he saved his money laboring on practically every ranch in this valley. He never owned real property, a car, a home or a wife, keeping much to himself and to clean living. Yet, he was always a familiar figure here. ...

The Reporter  
Feb. 23, 1951

## Light shed on missing man

More than three years have passed since, on September 7, 1950, Ahmed Khan, a familiar figure on Vacaville ranches for more than 40 years, left here on a pilgrimage to Mecca, Saudi Arabia, the "goal of all holy Moslem pilgrims." He knew Vacaville fruit as well as anyone and oldtime residents here well remember him as a reserved, rather stately, native of India.

For years he had been saving and planning for a realization of his life's ambition — to complete his pilgrimage to Mecca. He was about 65.

But last week a bit of information was received here which indicated that he had at least met with partial success. Walter Weir, Vacaville attorney who guided him through a maze of red tape before his travel was authorized, is in receipt of a letter from the American embassy stating that Ahmed did reach

Mecca — about a year late. That was a year ago, and nothing has since been learned of his whereabouts.

Ahmed had planned to go to Mecca, birthplace of Mohammed, in time to attend the three-week pilgrimage, in September of the same year, hoping to return late the following month. Weir had come to know him well here during the year's processing, and when no news about Ahmed was forthcoming, Weir placed the necessary inquiries. He feared foul play when no news as received.

Weir was aware that travel delay of only a few days would have made it impossible for him to go on the pilgrimage for which definite dates are set each year.

Weir said he is continuing efforts to learn of Ahmed's fortunes, whether fair or foul.

The Reporter  
Oct. 16, 1953

## Man died on lifelong quest

The three-year mystery of the whereabouts of Ahmed Khan, familiar figure in Vacaville ranches for more than 40 years who left in 1950 for an annual pilgrimage to Mecca, Saudi Arabia, was a mystery no longer here this week as saddening news was received by Walter W. Weir, local attorney.

Weir was in receipt of a letter on Monday from the American Consul in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, which official confirmed reports that Ahmed Khan died in "Mecca on 18th ZIL Hijra 369-11 (in the year 1950)."

Ahmed was a native of India but a British subject who moved to Vacaville shortly after the turn of the present century. He worked on many local ranches and saved his money, keeping in

mind always a cherished wish to some day go on the annual pilgrimage to Mecca, the hope of all good Moslems. After months of red tape, unraveled by Weir and different consuls, Ahmed finally left by plane to Mecca in September, 1950, the necessary papers having been arranged only a day before his scheduled flight.

Whether or not Ahmed had reached Mecca was not made known for almost two years, despite Weir's efforts to learn of his fate. Last year Weir learned that Ahmed had reached Mecca but there was no further trace.

This week's letter headed "Deceased Pakistan Pilgrims of 1950" gave a clue to at least partial success of Ahmed's Pilgrimage.

The Reporter  
Jan. 8, 1954



The Japanese Buddhist Temple, one of the few reminders of a once thriving local Asian population, burned Nov. 23, 1951, killing one.

## Man killed in blaze that razed temple



Reporter file photo

The temple was built in 1909 by the Japanese Association, a representative group of the large Japanese population here. Most families were ranch laborers or merchants on Dobbins Street.

Vacaville's most disastrous fire this year, causing fatal burns to one man, hospitalizing another and resulting in damage estimated in thousands of dollars, completely destroyed the Japanese Buddhist Temple on Dobbins street last Friday afternoon. The temple was the last standing reminder of the large Japanese and Japanese-American population that was here nearly half a century until 1942.

Cause of the blaze which resulted in the death of Fukimatsu Tsujimoto, 82, was traced to the explosion of a kerosene stove. It burst into flames and also injured Seitchi Yukawa, 61, another occupant of the temple. Tsujimoto died Sunday at the Solano County Hospital.

Nothing in the temple remained standing, not even the long brick chimney. It is reported the building

carried \$3,000 insurance.

The temple was built in 1909 by the Japanese Association, then a representative group of a large colony here of Japanese. Most families were either ranch laborers or merchants on Dobbins street. Following the outbreak of World War II, the alien and native born Japanese were evacuated to relocation centers and following that store buildings on both sides of the street were razed to make room for the present Federal housing project. Only the temple and its smaller adjoining buildings were left remaining. After the war, only a handful of the former residents returned to Vacaville, some taking up residence in the temporarily abandoned temple.

The Reporter  
Nov. 30, 1951

## Ex-local priest among those killed

The Reverend Father Henry Lande, 53, Catholic priest of Suisun and former pastor in Vacaville and Dixon, was crushed to death and Most Reverend James T. O'Dowd, 42, of San Francisco, died of injuries when the car in which they were riding last Friday afternoon was struck by a freight train on the boundary between Fairfield and Suisun.

Father Lande, who was driving the car, was pinned underneath the steering wheel and died about ten minutes later. Bishop O'Dowd was taken from the wreckage immediately to the Fairfield-Suisun Air Force Base hospital. After he recovered consciousness several hours later, he was reported to have shown improvement. On Saturday noon he was transferred to the St. Mary's hospital in San Francisco where he died late that night.

The two men, together with four other clergymen in a following car, were returning to Fairfield after surveying the ruins of St. Alphonsus church in Suisun which had been destroyed by fire on January 17.

"Father Lande, who was driving the car, was pinned underneath the steering wheel and died about ten minutes later,"

Authorities said the car apparently stopped on the tracks in front of the oncoming freight train at the crossing. Wreckage of the auto was dragged 300 feet and jammed between a Southern Pacific freight car and a flasher signal at the Rio Vista highway crossing.

Father Lande was pastor of St. Mary's Catholic church from March, 1946, until September, 1947, when he became pastor of St. Alphonsus church in Suisun. He was replaced here by Father Michael Garvey.

Last rights of the Catholic church were administered to Father Lande by the Very Rev. Father Thomas F. Byrne, pastor of St. Basil's Catholic church, Vallejo.

The Reporter  
Feb. 10, 1950

## Longtime Nut Tree worker dies at 72

Graveside services were held at the Vacaville-Elmira Cemetery yesterday for Paul Brewer, 72, who died at a Fairfield Hospital on Wednesday. The Rev. A. F. Fruhling officiated at the services.

Brewer had stopped at the Nut Tree in 1931, and asked for a hour's work, and had remained an

employee there until a few months ago when ill health forced him to retire.

Brewer was a native of Virginia.

Services were in charge of the McCune Funeral Home.

The Reporter  
Dec. 18, 1953

## Fruhling resigns as pastor

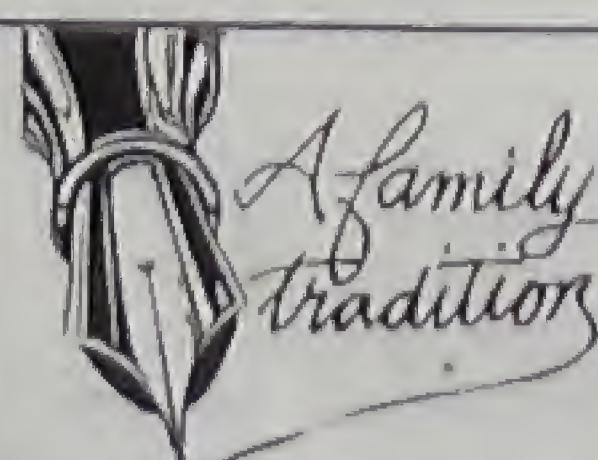
A long career of service to his church and community entered its closing stages on Wednesday evening of last week when Rev. A. F. Fruhling, pastor of the Community church, tendered his resignation at a congregational meeting. The resignation was accepted, and will be presented to the presbytery in Sacramento for official recognition. The board of trustees will then take up the item of calling a new minister to the pulpit.

Reverend Fruhling came to Vacaville with his family in June, 1913, replacing the Rev. H. A. Fisk, and took over the duties as pastor of what was then the Presbyterian church, now known as the Community church. During his 43 years of service, Rev. Fruhling has seen Vacaville grow from a village to a thriving young city, and he has baptized and later performed marriage rites for many of Vacaville's leading citizens.

The Reporter  
Sept. 21, 1956

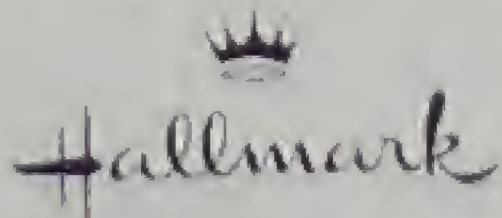


Mary Ann Bowman  
Sophomore Vaca High 1968



**Bowman's**  
Stationers

In 1968 when Wellborn's Office Supply Store became Bowman's Stationers, Mary Ann Bowman entered her sophomore year at Vacaville High School. She worked in the family enterprise after school and during the summer, helping build Bowman's into a leader in the office supply business. Mary Ann is now a mother of three and a mentor teacher in Grass Valley.



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In November of 1954 the public was invited to the dedication of the new McCune Garden Chapel, expanded and modernized to meet the needs of a growing community it served. One first entered a large foyer before going into the new spacious chapel with its high beamed ceiling. A huge oil painted mural of a serene mountain setting incorporated with a rock quarry waterfall became the focal point at the front of the chapel. At the side a natural indoor garden added to the peaceful atmosphere. Members of bereaved families could receive complete privacy during a service while in the family room adjoining the main chapel. Still located at 212 Main St., McCune Garden Chapel has served Vacaville and surrounding communities with dignity, understanding and courtesy for 61 years.



# A PIECE OF HERITAGE

## Vaca, Pena clans view new marker

More than 50 descendants, several generations removed from the Vaca and Pena families who were the first permanent settlers here more than a century ago, were the honored guests last Sunday afternoon to witness the unveiling of a historical plaque at the old family adobe home.

Joseph R. Knowland, chairman of the State Parks Commission of the Division of Parks and Beaches, cut the cord that unveiled the plaque on an eight-foot cement monument facing Highway 40.

The inscription on the plaque reads: "Rancho Los Putos"

"This is the site of Rancho Los Putos of 10 square leagues granted in 1845 by Gov. Pio Pico to Juan Felipe Pena and Manuel Cabeza Vaca. The Pena Adobe, erected in 1942, is still owned by descendants of the Pena-Vaca families.

"The town of Vacaville, nearby, was established in 1851 on land sold by Vaca to William McDaniel. Historical Landmark No. 534. Plaque erected September 18, 1955, by Vacaville Parlor No. 293, Native Daughters of the Golden West, in cooperation with the California State Parks Commission."

Although there were a number of known descendants of the early Spanish families who were not present, there were many direct descendants who traveled from many parts of California to witness the ceremony in response to written invitations from the local NDGW Parlor.

The old adobe, with its thick walls of adobe brick still standing, was thus dedicated as one of California's pioneer land marks. Hopes were expressed that the old home will some day become a state monument.

The remarks of Knowland, who delivered the dedicatory address, were preceded by the opening introductory remarks of the ceremony by Mrs. Ella Landy, president of the Vacaville Parlor. The pledge of allegiance was followed by the singing of the National Anthem by Mrs. Bonnie Rogers, accompanied on the accordion by Frank Gonzales. Assisting in the ceremony and colorfully dressed in lace mantilla and full length skirts was a blonde, six-year-old great-granddaughter of Juan Felipe Pena, Marie Elena Rivera. Many state grand officers of the NDGW and local guests were introduced, including Mayor Albert Porter, who added appropriate words to the ceremony.

The Reporter  
Sept. 23, 1955



The marker at Pena Adobe Park south of Vacaville was unveiled before descendants of two pioneer Pena families.

## Pena descendant dies

Time continues to take its toll among early Vacaville settlers and late Wednesday night death made its claim of one of the well known names in California history, Salvador John Pena. At the age of 79, he passed away at the family home on Davis street after a lengthy heart ailment.

The rosary will be recited tonight (Friday) at 8 o'clock at the McCune Garden Chapel with Father Peter Kelly officiating. Mass will be recited Saturday at 9:30 a.m. at St. Mary's Catholic church and interment will follow at the Vacaville-Elmira Cemetery.

Surviving him are his widow, Madeline, of the family home; a sister, Mrs. Juanita Coombs of Morgan Hill; and two stepsons, Joe Pulido of Sacramento and Frank Pulido, stationed at Travis Air Force Base.

Pena's ancestry dates back to the first white settlement of Vaca Valley. His great-great-grandfather was Felipe Pena who shared with Manuel Vaca a huge Spanish land

grant in 1941. The two families moved here the following year and each built an adobe-brick home in Lagoon Valley. A division was made of the land grants and in 1850, Vaca sold a section of it, providing that a town was to be named Vacaville.

Salvador was born on August 29, 1878, in the old adobe home which was destroyed by an earthquake in 1892. The Vaca adobe, a mile distant, still stands along Highway 40, marked by a monument to the memory of its settlers.

Pena continued to reside in Vacaville and devoted almost his entire life to fruit growing here. Several years ago he retired from work on his ranch four miles north of Vacaville. He traveled frequently in his youth and spoke at least five languages fluently.

He was a son of Mr. and Mrs. Juan Pena.

The Reporter  
Sept. 20, 1957

## Interest needed to save adobe from destruction

The threat of obliteration of the Pena Adobe has spurred on members of the Solano County Historical Society to try to recreate interest in the famous landmark, according to Harry Rowe, president of the society.

Rowe stated that plans for the new Highway 40 Freeway may wipe out the adobe if action is not taken at once to appeal to the State Highway Department for a change in highway location plans. So far, the Highway Department has been vague and non-committal in revealing the exact route of the freeway and access roads.

It is hoped by members of the Society that enough interest in the preservation of the adobe can be created in Vacaville to influence highway builders in their plans.

Not only is the adobe itself of great historical interest, but other items near the adobe should be preserved, according to Society members. These are the Indian mound on top of which the adobe is built; a rock pestle for grinding corn; and rocks carved with inscriptions dating back to Gold Rush Days.

Anyone interested in saving the adobe, and eventually restoring it, is asked to contact Rowe at Harrison 5-5548.

The Reporter  
March 1, 1957

## Scanning book for family tree

For whatever the information may be worth, the family tree of Vacaville-Elmira residents is growing fast and its ancestral roots are changing.

The information is revealed in the new telephone directories which were delivered to customers last week. The new directory of about 3,700 listings represents a whopping two-year increase from the 2,500 listings in November 1957.

The rapid increase in the area's population as indicated by the directory would give a clue, if one would take the time for a study, of the migration into California from other states.

For instance, the name Johnson appeared 14 times two years ago. Since that time the name has made the biggest jump in the number of listings. It has moved from fourth place to first place with 24 listings. Statistics have shown that the Johnsons in the southern states outnumber all others.

The once proud name of Lopez which outnumbered all others for years is now in fourth place with 17. The name has lost a root since two years ago when it was tied with the Millers at 18. The Millers are now in third place with 20.

The Smiths, too, have lost ground. Two years ago they were far ahead in first place with 27. Now, with 22, they are running in second place behind the Johnsons. Perhaps no one will ever come up with a theory on that one.

And there shouldn't be too much difficulty keeping up with the Jones. The name Jones appeared seven times two years ago and now, in spite of the population increase, it has dropped to six listings. What happened?

There's a feudin' warning to the members of the single Hatfield family by the three McCoys.

The Reporter  
Nov. 13, 1959

## ABCs of area phone listing

What's in a name? Within the past several days more than 1200 telephone directories reached users in the Vacaville-Elmira area this week, compliments of the Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Company. But none in the record number of listings can tell much of the makeup of the people here.

For instance, there is no one name or nationality of names that dominates. There are dozens of names more popular here than the three Joneses. The Browns are only slightly more numerous with four, while the Smiths are holding their own with seven and are among the top group.

But even so, the Smiths' score is eventuated by the Rogers, and the Chandlers and Millers with eight names each as still more abundant. On the very top of the list is the name of Lopez which appears ten times.

The director has little to show in odd names. There is no shorter name than Lee, Cox, Mix or Fry, to name several. A quick glance gives Hollingshead and Berkstresser as the longest names of 12 letters each, but there is little enough interest in names to write home about.

Can you top this?

The Reporter  
Dec. 1, 1950

## Two boys held as delinquents; seven girls placed in custody

Two Vacaville boys, ages 10 and 11, are in the juvenile detention home in Fairfield, seven girls between the ages of 12 and 13 have been placed in strict custody of parents by police and several other children are under police surveillance as the result of a serious outbreak of juvenile delinquency during the past month in Vacaville.

No less than ten cases of forced entry by local children were discovered by local police during the period, while a ranch home theft has been reported by the sheriff's office.

The entire local police force was called in to break the wave, described as the most serious in a long time. It led

Police Chief Elmer King to issue a stern warning that such recurrences will not be handled lightly.

There was the case of the two boys who are now in the custody of the county juvenile officer. They were arrested after police pieced together some telltale evidence of their having entered the science laboratory of the Vacaville high school. There they heated test tubes, in their own experimental methods, to create the telltale smoke that led to their arrest. Damage to the laboratory was estimated at \$25.

Faced with other bits of evidence left behind, such as a tennis shoe print, they allegedly confessed to police a series of forced entries and thefts beginning last

May 12.

Memories were blurred as to the exact order of the crimes which went something like this: stole a packed lug box of cherries from Lambert Marketing Company, stole two packed lug boxes from Pacific Fruit Exchange, broke a window to enter the principal's office at Monte Vista school and stole about \$5 in small change, entered the Monte Vista school principal's office again by punching a window screen with a wrench, entered the old high school building where they stole 12 pigeons and entered the new high school laboratory where their crime wave ended.

It was a different story for the seven

young girls who are still scheduled to answer to the county juvenile court. At intervals of several days, each one became involved in the illegal entry in the Salvador Marfil home on West street "many times," in each case at noon time when no one was home. The girls, for the most part, admitted they felt mischievous and admitted they stole about \$50 in currency from a bedroom during the frequent visits.

Then there were the thefts of a pushcart from the local PG&E office and the burglarizing of the Millard Sharpe ranch home by other boys.

The Reporter  
June 12, 1953

Our music has been filling your Vacaville homes for decades.

Our History: 1950-1959... Our 50's Were Great! On May 16, 1954 Bill & Marge Carroll were married in Vacaville. Rosanne, their daughter was born on Feb 13, 1958. In the late 50's Bill started a rock & roll band called "Impala Six" (more to come)



Bill, Marge & Rosanne Carroll

Vacaville Music  
359 Merchant St., Vacaville  
707-448-3651

See us for all of your musical needs.  
Our prices are GREAT.  
Our CD's are the BEST prices around.  
We also rent and sell VHS, laser, DVD's and games.

## Pedaling back the years

1952 Roadmaster Luxury Liner - One of the first industrial designers to utter the words "planned obsolescence" was Brooks Stevens who designed this Roadmaster. His meaning was "better, more desirable products each season so customers can't resist upgrading." In this case it meant a Shockmaster coiled-spring front fork, chrome-trimmed horn tank, rear carrier with tail lights, and a Searchbeam headlight which was unusually powerful and tempted kids to stay out after dark.



Ray's Cycle

400 Main St., Downtown Vacaville, 448-1911  
1121 Texas St., Downtown Fairfield, 428-1911



## BIRTHS

Jay Leno, comedian, 4/28/50  
 Stevie Wonder, singer, 5/13/50  
 Gary Larson, cartoonist, 8/14/50  
 Sally Ride, astronaut, 5/26/51  
 Anjelica Huston, actress, 7/8/51  
 Michael Keaton, actor, 9/9/51  
 Amy Tan, novelist, 2/19/52  
 Robin Williams, actor, 7/21/52  
 Jimmy Connors, tennis player, 9/2/52  
 Benazir Bhutto, Pakistani political leader, 6/21/53  
 Jean-Bertrand Aristide, Haitian political leader, 7/15/53  
 Matt Groening, cartoonist, 2/15/54  
 Oprah Winfrey, talk-show diva, 6/29/54  
 Chris Evert, tennis player, 12/21/54

## MAGAZINES

## Sex sells

Hugh Hefner, 27, sets off fireworks in the magazine industry with the first issue of *Playboy* in 1953. It features Marilyn Monroe on the cover and as the "Sweetheart of the Month" centerfold. (The term changes to "playmate" thereafter.) The first issue carries no date because Hefner isn't sure there will be a second. The new magazine — built around the centerfold, some serious journalism, erotic fiction, and advice to its young, upwardly mobile readers about how to live the good life — proves so successful that within three years it is outselling the reigning men's magazine, *Esquire*, for which Hefner once worked.

## TECHNOLOGY

## The tube proliferates

The TV is rapidly displacing the radio as a source of family entertainment in the early 1950s. By the end of 1952, 17 million American homes have TVs, up from 7 million in 1950. Among the programs Americans are watching is the "Today" show, which made its debut on Jan. 16 on NBC. Chicago radio personality Dave Garroway serves as master of ceremonies for the two-hour news and interview show developed by Sylvester "Pat" Weaver Jr. Working out of a street-level studio with a window facing street traffic in New York's Rockefeller Center, Garroway soon adds a sidekick: a chimpanzee named J. Fred Muggs. Another TV milestone: "The American Bandstand" makes its debut in January on ABC stations with a 22-year-old host named Dick Clark.



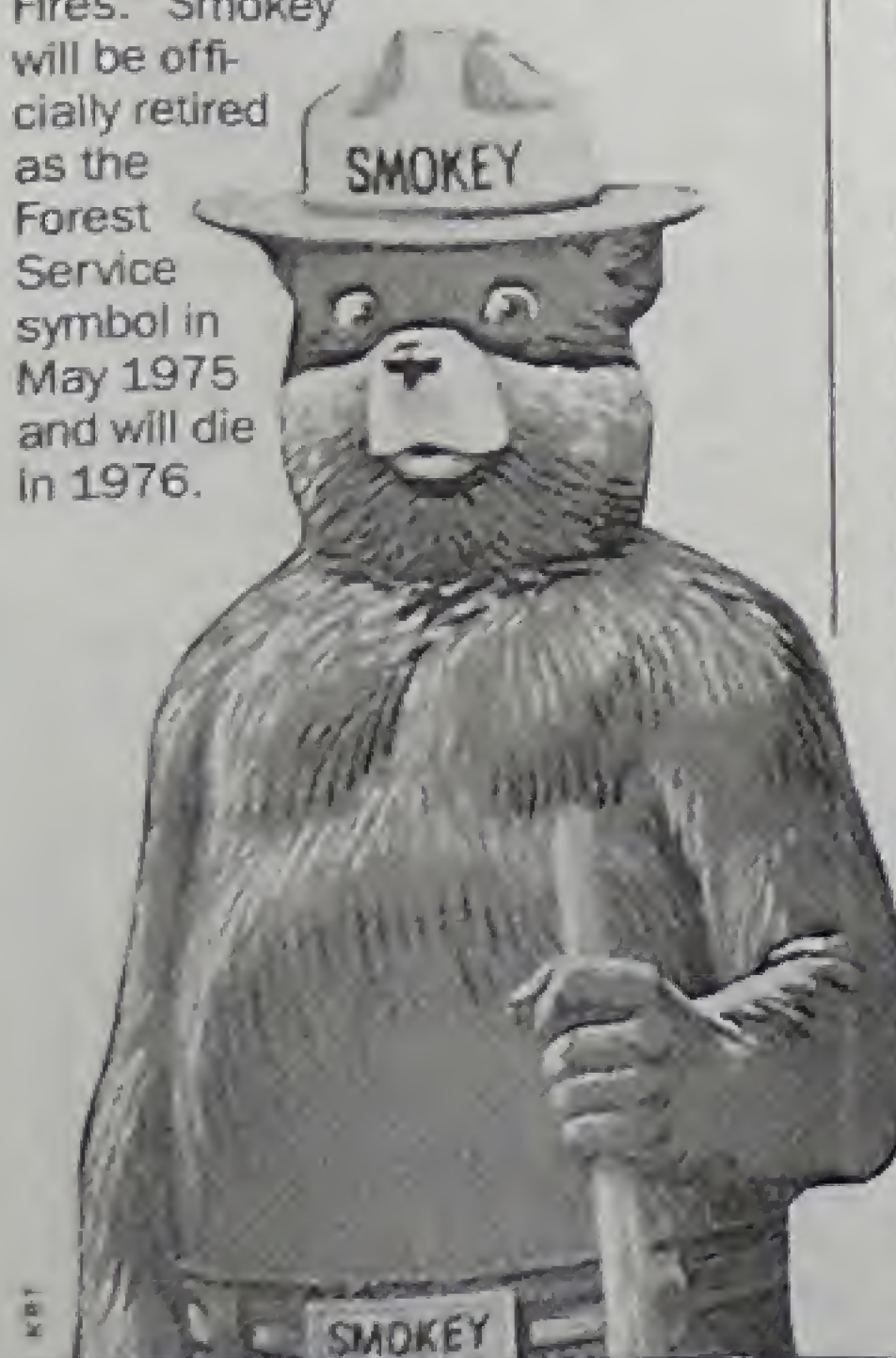
## Ahhhhhh, cool air

General Motors announces that it will offer air conditioning as an option in some of its 1953 car models. Tests in Texas and Arizona show that the systems can reduce the heat of a car to a comfortable level in minutes, no matter how long the vehicle has been in the sun.

## ICONS

## Smokey Bear says, 'Put out that match!'

A badly burned black bear cub, found clinging to a charred tree in the Capitan Mountains of New Mexico's Lincoln National Forest, becomes the inspiration for one of America's more enduring icons: Smokey Bear. The orphaned cub is flown by rangers to Santa Fe, where his paws are treated and he is nursed back to health at the home of a game warden. He is shipped to the National Zoo in Washington, D.C., and posters appear showing Smokey and bearing the message: "Only You Can Prevent Forest Fires." Smokey will be officially retired as the Forest Service symbol in May 1975 and will die in 1976.



## 1950-1954

## MILLENNIUM NOTEBOOK

## 1950

**Jan. 25:** State Department official Alger Hiss is sentenced to five years in prison after his conviction on two counts of perjury. Hiss was investigated by the House Un-American Activities Committee after allegations of Communist espionage.



**Jan. 31:** President Harry S. Truman orders the Atomic Energy Commission to begin developing a hydrogen bomb.

**Feb. 9:** A relatively unknown U.S. senator touches off a firestorm of fear when he claims that communist agents have infiltrated the government and hold crucial positions. Sen. Joseph McCarthy, R-Wis., soon holds hearings to prove his allegations and "McCarthyism" becomes a household word. A Senate panel in July concludes that his accusations have no foundation. His tirades will end in December 1954, when his fellow senators censure him for misconduct by a vote of 67-22.

**March 6:** The United Mine Workers end a monthlong strike after winning their first industry-wide contract.



**May 1:** Gwendolyn Brooks becomes the first female black poet to win a Pulitzer Prize. She wins for a collection called "Annie Allen."

**May 5:** Elizabeth Taylor marries hotel heir Nick Hilton. Her former nanny is quoted as saying: "Elizabeth loves and respects Mr. Hilton. He feels the same about her. That's why this will be the first and last marriage for both of them."

**June 25:** The North Korean army crosses the 38th Parallel into neighboring South Korea. President Truman calls on the United Nations to check what he calls unwarranted aggression against the democratic government in South Korea.

**June 27:** Truman authorizes Gen. Douglas MacArthur to provide naval and air power to aid the Republic of Korea.

**Sept. 15:** U.N. forces, led by American troops, launch a massive amphibious invasion at Inchon, South Korea. Fierce fighting continues, with U.N. forces liberating Seoul on Sept. 26 and reaching the North's capital, Pyongyang, a month later.



**Sept. 27:** Former heavyweight champion Joe Louis loses to Ezzard Charles in a championship bid prompted by his massive federal tax debt. He fails to regain the crown he relinquished when he retired 18 months earlier. It's only the second loss for Louis, 36, in 62 fights.

**Oct. 2:** The United Feature Syndicate begins distributing "Peanuts" by Charles Schulz.

**Nov. 1:** An attempt by two Puerto Rican nationalists to assassinate President Truman ends in a gunbattle between the armed men and Capitol police. The shoot-out takes the lives of one assailant and a police officer. The second gunman is arrested. Truman is unaware of the incident until it is over.

**Dec. 8:** President Truman bans trade with the People's Republic of China.

**Dec. 10:** U.N. diplomat Ralph J. Bunche becomes the first black person to win the Nobel Peace Prize. Bunche, grandson of a slave, receives the award for mediating the conflict between Arabs and Israelis.

## On-the-fly recording launches The King

July 5, 1954, marks a turning point in the life of a 19-year-old truck driver for Crown Electric of Memphis. For the second time in as many days, the aspiring enter-

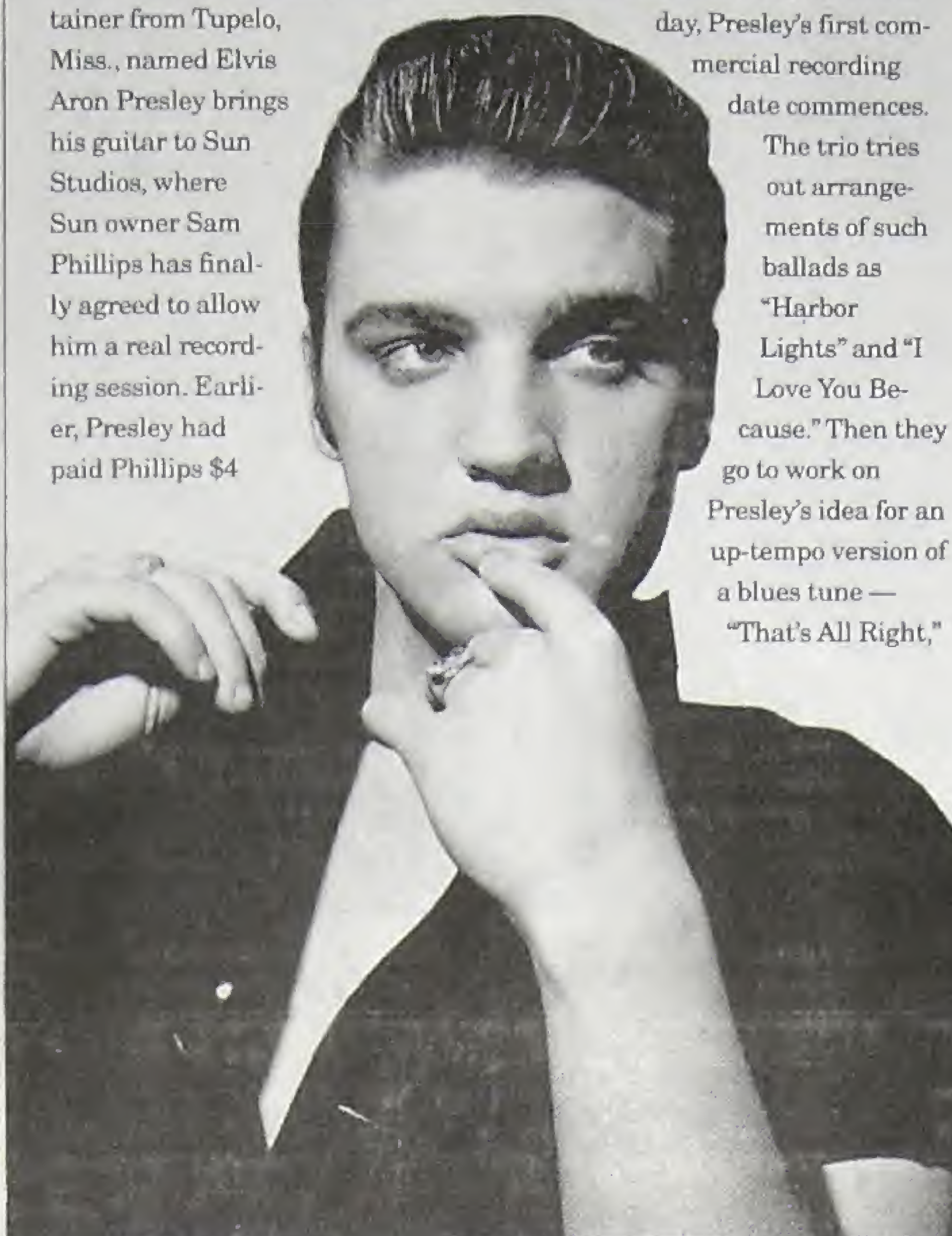
tainer from Tupelo, Miss., named Elvis Aron Presley brings his guitar to Sun Studios, where Sun owner Sam Phillips has finally agreed to allow him a real recording session. Earlier, Presley had paid Phillips \$4

to make a "vanity" record.

Presley is joined by two seasoned pros, guitarist Scotty Moore and bass player Bill Black, for a practice session on July 4; the next

day, Presley's first commercial recording date commences.

The trio tries out arrangements of such ballads as "Harbor Lights" and "I Love You Because." Then they go to work on Presley's idea for an up-tempo version of a blues tune — "That's All Right,"



by Arthur "Big Boy" Crudup. After several takes, the trio finds a tempo and blend that seems to work. The recording made that day, "That's All Right" (with its flip side, "Blue Moon of Kentucky"), launches the Elvis phenomenon, thanks to a boost by Memphis disc jockey Dewey Phillips. The DJ, no relation to Sam Phillips, is deluged with phone calls after playing the record only once; Memphis-area stores sell 6,000 copies in one week.

Another Elvis milestone comes July 30, just 25 days after Presley recorded his breakout hit. He, Moore and Black, the story goes, were playing a concert in Memphis. After a lackluster matinee show, Presley decides to crank his on-stage energy up a notch. In fact, during the evening show, he concentrates so hard on his performance that he fails to control a nervous twitch in his leg. It is perhaps the most fortuitous twitch in pop music history. As Presley will later recall: "I came offstage, and my manager told me that they was hollering because I was wiggling my legs. I went back out for an encore, and I did a little more. And the more I did, the wilder they went."

## 1951

**Jan. 29:** The 18-year-old Elizabeth Taylor divorces Nick Hilton. She will marry British actor Michael Wilding less than a year after her divorce is finalized.

**Feb. 26:** The 22nd Amendment to the Constitution takes effect. It says that no person may be elected to the presidency for more than two terms.

**March 18:** NBC signs Milton Berle to a 30-year contract, said to be the TV industry's longest.

**April 11:** President Truman fires Gen. Douglas MacArthur as supreme commander of Allied forces in the Pacific and orders him to return home in the midst of the Korean War. The Chicago Tribune, along with a host of other newspapers, demands the impeachment and conviction of the president and calls him "unfit, morally and mentally, for his high office." Truman also is booed in public and hanged in effigy for his actions against MacArthur, a hero to many Americans.

**June 25:** The first commercial color broadcast is presented by CBS. Unfortunately, no color TVs are owned by the public, and the only people who see the broadcast in color are CBS technicians watching on monitors.

**July 9:** The NAACP says that the "Amos and Andy" television show depicts blacks as "amoral, semiliterate, lazy, stupid, dishonest and scheming."



**Sept. 3:** The soap opera "Search for Tomorrow" makes its premiere on CBS. Performers who will get their start on the soap include Susan Sarandon, Jill Clayburgh, Kevin Kline, Kevin Bacon and Don Knotts.

**Oct. 15:** "I Love Lucy," starring red-headed comedian Lucille Ball, makes its premiere on CBS.

**Nov. 30:** The American Medical Association approves treatment of drinking water with fluorides to reduce tooth decay.

## 1952

**March 8:** A mechanical heart is placed for the first time in a human by surgeons at the Pennsylvania Hospital in Philadelphia. The patient dies 81 hours later.

**March 10:** Cuban dictator Gen. Fulgencio Batista y Zaldívar regains power in a military coup, ousting President Carlos Prío Socarras. Under Batista, Cuba becomes a rum-soaked "island of sin," a playground for casino-owning gangsters and American high rollers.

**April 15:** President Truman signs a peace treaty with Japan, granting full sovereignty to the World War II enemy and officially ending the war in the Pacific.

**May 12:** Washington receives its first female ambassador, Shrimati Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit of India.

**May 29:** Greece grants women the right to vote.

**July 7:** The liner SS United States sets a trans-Atlantic speed record on its first round-trip voyage to Europe with an eastward crossing of three days, 10 hours and 40 minutes.

**July 19:** The Summer Olympics open in Helsinki, Finland, and the Soviet flag is raised at the event for the first time. One man dominates the Games: long-distance runner Emil Zátopek of Czechoslovakia, who wins three gold medals. American athlete Bob Mathias wins the decathlon.

**Aug. 30:** Inventor R. Buckminster Fuller displays a strong but lightweight structure called a "geodesic dome." The dome revolutionizes construction techniques.

**Sept. 10:** Representatives of the German and Israeli governments sign an agreement that awards close to a billion dollars in reparations for Nazi crimes against the Jewish people.

**Sept. 23:** Presidential candidate Dwight D. Eisenhower's running mate, Richard Nixon, responds to reports that he personally benefited from a political slush fund. As 60 million Americans watch on TV, Nixon denies using the fund for personal bene-

## At 25, a queen



Princess Elizabeth and her husband, Prince Philip, are in the first week of what is intended to be a five-month goodwill tour of East Africa when they are

lodged at Treetops on the night of Feb. 5-6, 1952. During the night, as Elizabeth sleeps in Kenya and her father, King George VI, slumbers at the royal estate of Sandringham in England, the king dies peacefully of advanced lung cancer and heart disease.

Unaware that the British crown has passed to her during the night, Elizabeth sets out at dawn to fish for trout. Not until lunchtime does the news reach the angling party that George VI is dead. Suddenly, it dawns on this 25-year-old woman, who until now has led a carefree life, that she is queen.

The eldest daughter of George VI, Elizabeth Alexandra Mary takes the oath of accession to the British throne on Feb. 8 and is proclaimed head of the British Commonwealth. She will be formally crowned in Westminster Abbey on June 2, 1953.

fit. But he adds: "I did get something, a gift after the nomination. It was a little cocker spaniel dog, black and white, spotted. Our little girl Tricia — the 6-year-old — named it Checkers. The kids, like all kids, love the dog. Regardless of what they say about it, we are going to keep it." It is a masterful piece of manipulation. Viewers cry, letters of support pour in and Nixon rides Ike's coattails into the vice presidency.



**Nov. 1:** The U.S. Atomic Energy Commission explodes the first hydrogen, or nuclear-fusion, bomb, at the Eniwetok proving grounds in the Pacific Ocean.

**Dec. 15:** A scrawny, blond ex-GI named George Jorgenson returns from Denmark as a tall blonde named Christine. While he is not the first transsexual, he is the first to go public.

## 1953

**Jan. 1:** Country music legend Hank Williams dies at age 29 of heart failure while sleeping in the back seat of a Cadillac.

**March 5:** Josef Vissarionovich Stalin, the most powerful and brutal leader in Russia's history, dies in Moscow at age 73. Stalin's handpicked heir, Georgi Malenkov, 51, assumes control of the country. Nikita Khrushchev, 58, soon emerges as second-in-command to Malenkov, who will head the U.S.S.R. until 1958, when Khrushchev will take full control.

**May 29:** Mountaineer Edmund Hillary of New Zealand and Tensing Norgay, his Nepalese Sherpa guide, become the first men to conquer Mount Everest, the world's tallest mountain.

**June 19:** Julius and Ethel Rosenberg are executed at Sing Sing Prison in Ossining, N.Y. They were convicted of selling atomic secrets to the Soviet Union and became the first, and only, civilians to be executed under the General Espionage Act of 1917.

**July 27:** Fighting ends in Korea after three years. Combatants sign an armistice, but a peace treaty is never signed. An estimated 55,000 Americans have been killed and 102,000 wounded.



Jackie Kennedy

**Sept. 12:** Sen. John Fitzgerald Kennedy of Massachusetts weds Jacqueline Lee Bouvier in Newport, R.I., in what some call the wedding of the decade.

**Sept. 30:** California Gov. Earl Warren is chosen 14th chief justice of the United States, replacing recently deceased Fred M. Vinson. Unexpectedly, Warren will preside over one of the most liberal and activist courts in the institution's history.

**Oct. 5:** The New York Yankees win the World Series for an unprecedented fifth straight year, beating the Brooklyn Dodgers. It's the 16th championship for the Yanks. (Ticket prices are raised to \$10 for box seats, \$7 for reserved and \$4 for standing room.)

**Nov. 9:** Welsh poet Dylan Thomas, who counseled, "Do not go gently into that good night," dies at age 39 after a night of drinking in New York.

**Nov. 27:** Eugene O'Neill, considered by many critics to be America's greatest playwright, dies in Boston. O'Neill, 65, had been suffering from a degenerative disorder so severe he was unable to sign his name.

## 1954

**Jan. 14:** Baseball legend Joe DiMaggio marries movie star Marilyn Monroe. The union will last only nine months.

**March 1:** Puerto Rican nationalists draw guns in the gallery of the U.S. House of Representatives. Amid shouts of "Free Puerto Rico!" they spray the chamber with bullets; five lawmakers are wounded, although all survive. The four assailants receive the maximum sentence, more than 100 years in prison each.

**May 6:** Briton Roger Bannister achieves a goal that some thought was unattainable: running a mile in less than 4 minutes. Bannister runs the mile in 3:59.4. Six weeks later, Australian John Landy runs the mile in 3:58.

**May 7:** France's eight-year war against Vietnamese guerrillas led by Ho Chi Minh reaches its low point with the fall of the Vietnamese city of Dien Bienphu. By July, France has had enough of the bloody quagmire. A peace treaty is signed that gives Ho control of northern Vietnam, while French-backed Bao Dai rules the southern half.

**May 17:** A Supreme Court decision wraps up a 3-year-old lawsuit brought by Oliver Brown, a parent who wanted his daughter to attend a school near her home. The NAACP took the Browns' case and four others, collectively called Brown vs. Board of Education, to the Supreme Court. The court's 9-0 decision said that "separate educational facilities are inherently unequal" and orders the states to proceed "with all deliberate speed" to integrate them.

**July 12:** President Eisenhower proposes an interstate highway system.

The Past Century - Now it's available online.



# 1955

■ **Jan. 7:** Contralto Marian Anderson becomes the first black person to sing at the New York Metropolitan Opera House.

■ **Jan. 19:** President Dwight D. Eisenhower allows filming of a presidential news conference for the first time. TV and motion picture newsreel photographers cover the event.

■ **April 5:** Sir Winston Churchill, age 81, retires as British prime minister and is succeeded by Sir Anthony Eden.

■ **April 5:** Richard J. Daley, formerly Cook County Democratic Party chairman, is elected mayor of Chicago and begins his 21-year career as mayor of the nation's second-largest city.



Daley

■ **April 12:** Jonas Salk, a research scientist who specializes in viruses, becomes a household name after he announces that field trial results on a vaccine for polio have proven the treatment safe and effective. Salk refuses to patent the vaccine. He says he has no desire to profit from the discovery, only to help people.

■ **June 11:** Eighty people die and nearly 100 are injured as the worst accident in the history of auto racing occurs at Le Mans, France. Three cars are involved in the accident, and one of the cars slams into a grandstand.

■ **June 13:** The first executive jet plane, a Beech Paris, is displayed in Purchase, N.Y.

■ **June 24:** Soviet MiGs shoot down a U.S. Navy patrol plane over the Bering Strait.

■ **Aug. 27:** Australia, led by Ken Rosewall, retakes tennis' Davis Cup from the United States.

■ **Sept. 19:** The 10-year government of Argentine President Juan Peron ends with his resignation after a three-day revolt by military forces led by Brig. Gen. Dalmiro Felix Videla Belaguer. Peron is exiled to Paraguay on Sept. 24.

■ **Sept. 24:** President Eisenhower is hospitalized after a heart attack.

■ **Sept. 30:** Actor James Dean, 24, dies instantly when his Porsche Spyder skids off a road near Paso Robles, Calif., and smashes into a telephone pole. Four days after his death, Warner Bros. releases, on schedule, "Rebel Without a Cause," director Nicholas Ray's drama of juvenile delinquency.

■ **Dec. 5:** The American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations merge, with George Meany as leader.

# 1956

■ **February:** In a four-hour diatribe delivered before the 20th Communist Party Congress in Moscow, Josef Stalin's successor, Nikita Khrushchev, denounces "the cult of the individual" and attacks his former boss for his "intolerance, his brutality, his abuse of power." Ever so briefly, the party's iron grip will ease. In the next year, an estimated 8 million people will be released from the gulag work camp system and thousands of purged Communist Party members will be "rehabilitated."

■ **April 2:** Two soap operas make their premieres on daytime television, "As the World Turns" on CBS and "Edge of Night" on ABC.

■ **April 19:** Grace Patricia Kelly is at the pinnacle of her movie career when she marries Monaco's Prince Rainier III in the Cathedral of St. Nicholas. The "wedding of the century," a heady mixture of Hollywood glamour and royal mystique, actually took place twice. The first was a civil ceremony April 18 in the throne room of the palace in Monte Carlo.

Grace Kelly



# 1955-1959

## MILLENNIUM NOTEBOOK

■ **April 27:** Rocky Marciano retires undefeated as world heavyweight boxing champion. He won all 49 of his bouts, including six in defense of the championship, and 43 by knockouts.

■ **June 29:** Actress Marilyn Monroe and playwright Arthur Miller marry in London, she for the third time, he for the second.

■ **June 30:** In the worst commercial air disaster to date, 128 people are killed when two airliners crash into the Grand Canyon. The accident involves a Trans World Airlines Super Constellation and a United Airlines DC-7, which are thought to have collided in flight.

■ **July 25:** At 11:10 p.m., about 60 miles off Nantucket Island, the paths of the Italian passenger liner Andrea Doria and the Swedish liner Stockholm converge in dense fog. The Italian ship is doomed; the bow of the Stockholm is crumpled, but the ship stays afloat. During the next 11 hours, before the Andrea Doria slides beneath the sea at 10:09 a.m., people gather around TVs and radios to follow the plight of the stricken liners. Fifty-one people die.

■ **July 26:** Egypt's nationalist president, Gamal Abdel Nasser, seizes the Suez Canal from the French-controlled Suez Canal Co. The action makes Nasser a hero of Arab nationalism. But it prompts Israel to invade the Sinai Peninsula and the Gaza Strip on Oct. 29, followed by a French-British invasion of Egypt on Oct. 31. International pressure forces Britain, France and Israel to end the hostilities, and a United Nations emergency force occupies the Canal Zone. All troops will be evacuated by the spring of 1957.

■ **Sept. 24:** The world's first trans-Atlantic telephone cable begins operation. The twin cables, 2,250 miles long, stretch from Clarenville, Newfoundland, to Oban, Scotland.

■ **Oct. 8:** In game five of the 53rd World Series, Don Larsen of the New York Yankees pitches the first perfect game in World Series history, beating the Brooklyn Dodgers 2-0. The Yankees win the Series, four games to three.

■ **Nov. 6:** President Eisenhower wins a second term in a landslide victory over Democrat Adlai E. Stevenson. "Ike" wins 57 percent of the popular vote and 457 electoral votes, compared with 42 percent of the popular vote and 74 electoral votes for the former Illinois governor.

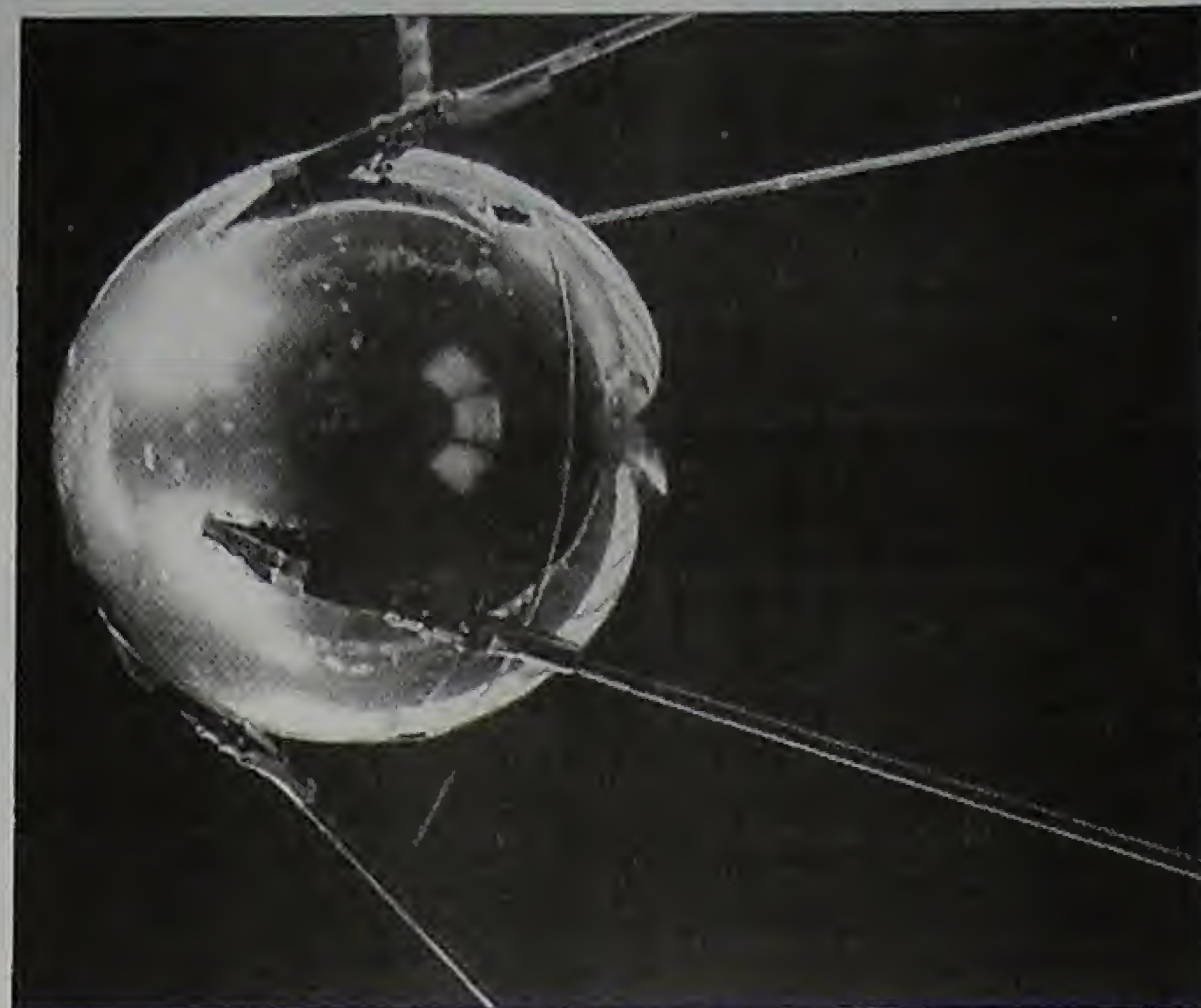
# 1957

■ **Jan. 5:** President Eisenhower calls for aid to Mideast countries that resist communism. The policy becomes known as the Eisenhower Doctrine.

■ **July 6:** American tennis player Althea Gibson is the first black to win at Wimbledon. She wins the women's singles and doubles and returns to a ticker-tape parade in New York.

■ **Sept. 4:** Arkansas National Guardsmen turn away nine black students enrolled at Central High School in Little Rock, Ark. Gov. Orval Faubus had ordered the National Guard to surround the school, claiming it was needed to keep the peace during integration. A U.S. District Court directs Faubus to comply with the integration order, and, after meeting with President Eisenhower, the governor reluctantly agrees to observe "the supreme law of the land." The "Little Rock Nine" return to school Sept. 23 but are sent home for their safety when rioting whites overwhelm a police contingent. The next day, the mob is back, and Eisenhower sends in federal troops. On Sept. 25, the armed troops escort the black students to class. Eight of the nine will finish the school year, but white resistance to school integration continues, and officials close Central High for the next year rather than integrate.

■ **Sept. 23:** Francois "Papa Doc" Duvalier, running on a program of social



The launch of the Soviet Sputnik starts the Cold War space race.

## Beeps from the sky

For the first time in human history, an artificial satellite is dispatched Oct. 4 to orbit the Earth. The 184-pound aluminum sphere, smaller than a basketball, circles the globe every 95 minutes, emitting ominous "beeps" and transmitting data to its masters on terra firma. Trouble is, those masters are in the Soviet Union. And that causes no end of worry for Americans in the paranoid Cold War world. Humankind has made a first tentative step into the cosmos, and the space race between the world's two superpowers is off and running.

As Sputnik circles the globe from pole to pole, astronomers rush to track its orbit and eavesdrop on its radio signal, politicians stake out positions, and President Eisenhower dismisses the Soviet space feat as "one small ball in the air, something that does not raise my apprehension, not one iota." But Sen. Stuart Symington, D-Mo., sums up the worries of many Amer-

icans on Oct. 5: "Unless our defense policies are promptly changed, the Soviets will move from superiority to supremacy."

The news of Sputnik I comes soon after the Soviet Union's test in August of its first intercontinental ballistic missile. Then Sputnik II goes up Nov. 3, carrying a live dog, Laika, to obtain biomedical data. That satellite weighs 1,121 pounds, lifted into orbit by a military rocket. Suddenly, education in math and science becomes a national priority.

The U.S. military has been working on vehicles to launch ballistic missiles with a range of 1,500 miles, and that technology is tapped to compete with Sputnik. The first American attempt to launch a satellite fails Dec. 6 when a Navy Vanguard rocket carrying a 3½-pound satellite lifts only two feet off the launch pad at Cape Canaveral and explodes. Success will come early in the next year with the launch of Explorer I.

# 1958

■ **Jan. 29:** Charles Starkweather, 19, and Caril Ann Fugate, 14, are captured in Wyoming after a 110-mph car chase and shoot-out. Starkweather confesses to killing 10 people in or near Lincoln, Neb., telling the sheriff in Lincoln that he just wanted to "be somebody." Starkweather represents a new breed of American criminal: the serial killer. In June 1959, Starkweather will be put to death in Nebraska's electric chair. Fugate is sentenced to prison; she will be paroled in 1976.

■ **April 11:** About 1,500 jam the Great Hall of the Moscow Conservatory and thousands more wait outside to hear Van Cliburn, a tall young pianist from Texas, perform during the Tchaikovsky International Piano Competition. Despite sky-high Cold War tensions, Cliburn brings down the house and wins first prize.

■ **April 15:** The national pastime goes coast to coast as major-league baseball debuts in California. The New York Giants, moved to San Francisco, and the Brooklyn Dodgers, uprooted to Los Angeles, meet for the first big-league game at Seals Stadium in San Francisco, where the Giants defeat the Dodgers 8-0.

■ **April 16:** Arnold Palmer, son of a golf pro from Youngstown, Pa., wins the Masters by a stroke to claim his first major championship. By year's end, Palmer is the tour's leading money winner, earning \$42,000.

■ **May 14:** Vice President Richard Nixon and his wife, Pat, cut short a Latin America tour after demonstrators in Peru and Venezuela shower them with boas and stones. U.S. troops are dispatched to protect the Nixons.

■ **May 23:** Dissatisfied by his country's standing in the econom-

ic world order, Mao Tse-tung launches China on a "Great Leap Forward." In a mass mobilization, millions of peasants are organized into about 24,000 "people's communes" in the countryside. The program appears successful at first, but waste and mismanagement lead to disappointing results. Historians will later estimate that 20 million or more Chinese died in the famine resulting from the "great leap."

■ **June 28:** Pele leads Brazil to the World Cup soccer title with a 5-2 win over Sweden.

■ **July 31:** King Faisal of Iraq, along with the nation's crown prince and premier, are executed in a military coup. President Eisenhower dispatches 5,000 Marines to Lebanon.

■ **Aug. 5:** The first undersea crossing of the North Pole is made by the nuclear-powered submarine USS Nautilus. The vessel submerged near Point Barrow, Alaska, on Aug. 1 and traveled under the 50-foot-thick ice cap for 96 hours before surfacing.

■ **Oct. 26:** The jet age dawns when Pan American World Airways launches trans-Atlantic flights between New York and Paris using a Boeing 707.

■ **Oct. 28:** Angelo Giuseppe Cardinal Roncalli, patriarch of Venice, is named pope to succeed Pius XII, who died Oct. 9. The new pope will be known as John XXIII.

# 1959

■ **Jan. 1:** Led by a fiery 32-year-old lawyer named Fidel Castro, rebels known as "the bearded ones" seize power in Cuba after two years of civil war. Dictator Fulgencio Batista resigns after seven years in power and flees to Miami. Upon hearing that the new rulers will honor international agreements, the United States recognizes the government within days. But the honeymoon will be very short-lived. Castro assumes the title of premier Feb. 16, pledging to restore the Cuban economy, refurbish democracy and oppose dictatorships in Latin America.

■ **Jan. 3:** Alaska is admitted to the Union as the 49th state.

■ **Jan. 8:** Charles de Gaulle is installed as president of France with more authority than any French leader since Napoleon III.

■ **Feb 3:** A four-seater plane carrying touring performers Ritchie Valens, J.P. "The Big Bopper" Richardson and Buddy Holly takes off after 1 a.m. en route to Fargo, N.D. But only a few miles from the airport, it plunges into a snow-covered cornfield in Iowa, killing all aboard. The trio becomes rock music's first martyrs.



Rock 'n' roller Buddy Holly

■ **April 9:** The first seven U.S. astronauts are picked from the ranks of military pilots by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. After rigorous training and testing, one will be selected to become the first American in space in 1961.

■ **June 11:** "Lady Chatterley's Lover," a 1928 novel by D.H. Lawrence, is banned from the mails by Postmaster General Arthur E. Summerfield, who says, "Any literary merit the book may have is far outweighed by the pornographic and smutty passages and words, so that the book, taken as a whole, is an obscene and filthy work." The Postal Service lifts the ban July 21.

■ **Aug. 21:** Hawaii is admitted to the Union as the 50th state. Eisenhower issues an order for a new flag of 50 stars in staggered rows, which will become official July 4, 1960.

## BIRTHS

Kevin Costner, actor, 1/18/58  
William Henry Gates III, software designer/Microsoft owner, 10/28/58  
Mel Gibson, actor, 1/3/56  
"Sugar" Ray Leonard, boxer, 5/17/56  
Joe Montana, football player, 6/11/56  
Martina Navratilova, tennis player, 10/18/56  
Katie Couric, broadcast journalist, 1/7/57  
Shelton Jackson "Spike" Lee, filmmaker, 3/20/57  
Caroline Bouvier Kennedy, first child of John F. and Jacqueline Kennedy, 11/27/57  
Michelle Pfeiffer, actress, 4/29/58  
Prince Rogers Nelson, musician known as "Prince," 8/6/58  
Louise Ciccone, pop star Madonna, 8/16/58  
Michael Jackson, pop singer, 8/29/58  
John McEnroe, tennis player, 2/16/59  
Randy Travis, country singer, 5/4/59  
Earvin "Magic" Johnson, basketball player, 8/14/59  
Maya Lin, designer of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C., 10/5/59  
Florence Griffith Joyner, track star, 12/21/59



## ICONS

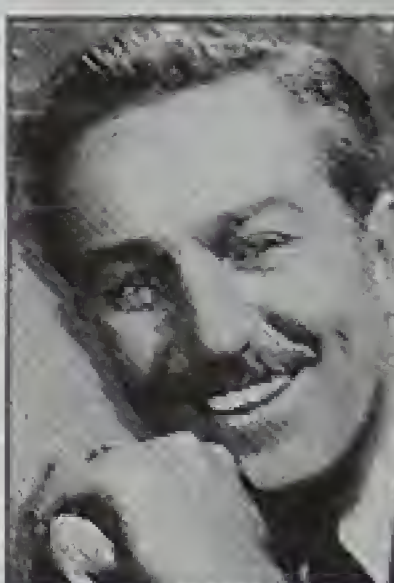
### The birth of Barbie

Shapely, wrinkle-free, with pouty lips and impossible measurements, Barbie is born March 9, 1959. Barbie, a fashion doll who will make generations of young girls feel inadequate about their bodies, is the plastic offspring of Mattel founders Ruth and Elliot Handler. She is named for their daughter, Barbara. The doll's debut is at the American Toy Fair in New York. Barbie No. 1 is dressed in a black-and-white-striped bathing suit and has arched come-hither eyebrows. She comes in blond or brunette models. She sells for about \$2.50. Four decades later, an original Barbie in mint condition would bring about \$5,000. In coming years, Mattel will produce more than 1 billion Barbies and Barbie spinoffs, including Ken, her perennial escort, born in 1961.



### Disney's dream

1955 is a banner year for Walt Disney. The prime-time TV show "Disneyland" is riding high in the ratings. The Mouseketeers are singing and dancing their way into living rooms as "The Mickey Mouse Club" becomes a must-see program for kids. Millions of youngsters sport coonskin caps in imitation of a Disney-fied Davy Crockett played by Fess Parker in a Technicolor movie. But the shiniest gem in the Disney tiara is the opening of the Disneyland theme park on July 17 in Anaheim, Calif. Potential investors were a bit cool to Disney's dream, and the entertainment giant had to come up with most of the \$17 million to build the Magic Kingdom. As with most things Disney touched, Disneyland is an instant success.

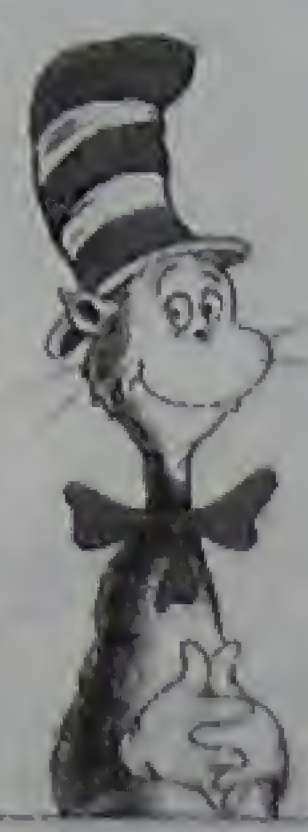


## BOOKS

### The Beat generation

With publication of "On the Road" in 1957, Jack Kerouac becomes the spokesman for the restless, disaffected Beat Generation. The book recounts the cross-country odyssey of two pals. Most critics pan the book, but it is read by anyone who wants to be "hip." It makes the bestseller list and the unfettered lifestyle evoked by Kerouac has a seductive influence on young people. Attired in jeans, sweaters, sandals and dark glasses, these 1950s nonconformists become known as "beatniks."

Other popular reads in 1957:  
■ "The Cat in the Hat," by Dr. Seuss (Theodor Seuss Geisel), aims at beginning readers bored with dull "Dick and Jane" texts. It's a hit and will sell up to 9 million copies in 20 years. Seuss, who has been writing children's books for 20 years, also publishes "How the Grinch Stole Christmas" this year.  
■ "On the Beach," by Nevil Shute.  
■ "Atlas Shrugged," by Ayn Rand.



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